THE TIME OF HER LIFE

MAUDE ROBINSON

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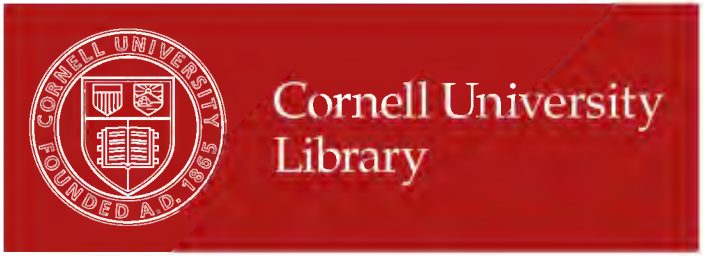

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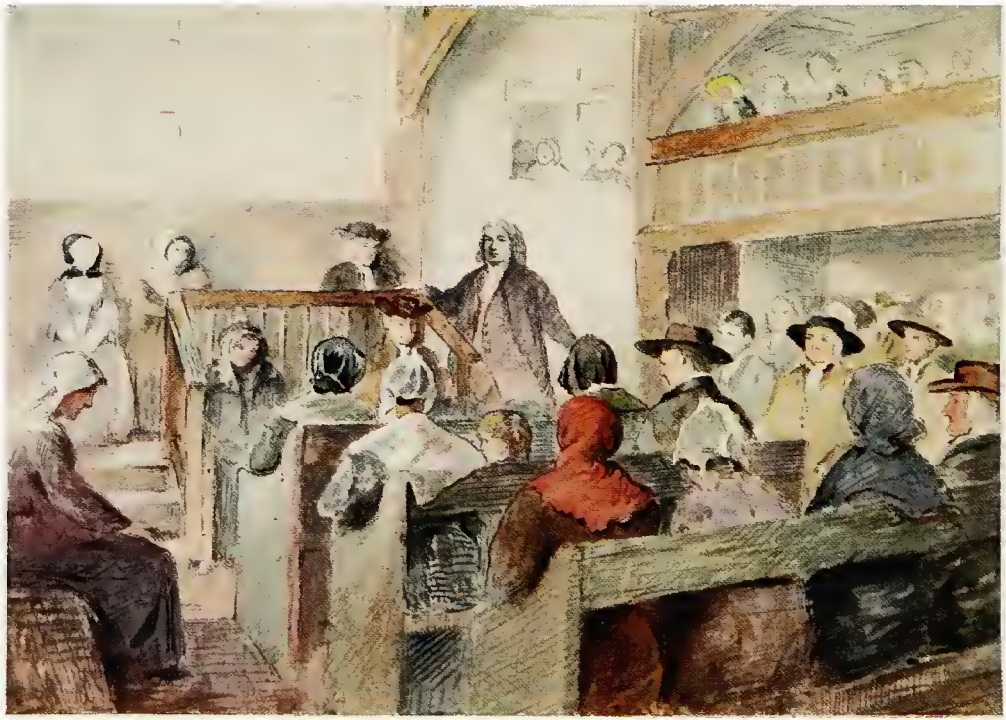

WILLIAM PENN'S APPOINTED [illegible] AT THE [illegible]

THE TIME OF HER LIFE

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

MAUDE ROBINSON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

PERCY BIGLAND

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PREFACE

THERE have been in the past a good many attempts in fiction to portray Quaker life with its peculiarities, its faults and its virtues; but coming from the pens of outsiders, many of the pictures are far from correct, or pleasing; with perhaps, the one exception of "The Quaker Settlement," in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

I have endeavoured in these stories to give a more authentic presentment of phases of Friendly life, in the hope that it will interest the rising generation, many of whom so nobly uphold the true spirit of Quakerism, although what were once considered its essential outer signs are rapidly becoming things of the past.

It may be best to point out at once how much is fact, and how much fiction. The stories were first suggested to me by handling old family relics, which set me trying to realise the lives and characters of their original owners.

Becky's book, Abraham's box, Sallie's silver cup, and Ann and Sarah's tea sets, all impelled

me to find out all I could of the real people—scanty details generally, but eked out by contemporary history it was easy to picture my ancestors in their homely surroundings.

"An Emperor's Visit" is substantially true and is composed from family tradition, and the lively letters of the young governess.

"Drawn for the Militia" is also true, as far as I have been able to find out the details, and I well remember the hero.

Tryphena Holloway, of Brighton, was proud of the fact of having been treated to a ride in William's Penn's coach as a child. She told it herself to Elizabeth Glaisyer, a very aged Friend who died within living memory; but I must confess the date of the ride was probably some years later than I have found it convenient to place it.

"Dorcas Brown's School" is also substantially true, but names and places are disguised.

In the remaining tales the characters are all imaginary, but many incidents, such as the story of poor Thwaite, are genuine, and I trust they give a tolerably truthful picture of Quaker life at the dates which are given.

Most of the dates are in the years which we

are apt to consider the dark ages of Quakerism, but among much that must be regretted there were doubtless many sweet and faithful souls who served their generation well, and passed on to those who succeeded them the true spirit of that Quaker Testimony which we feel still has its sphere of useful service in the Christian world.

So much interesting knowledge dies with each generation that I have endeavoured in these tales to preserve for our young Friends who live in such a different atmosphere, some picture of the lives, joys, and sorrows of those who have gone before us.

MAUDE ROBINSON.

Saddlescombe,
Hassocks, Sussex.

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From Drawings by PERCY BIGLAND.

THE TIME OF HER LIFE

1682

It was a rare treat for the few Friends of Brighthelmstone to have the presence of William Penn at an afternoon meeting. From Blatchington on the Downs, and even from Hurstpierpoint, others had come, who had been gathered in by his preaching in former days, and now he had returned from his first visit to the new Colony in America they were anxious to hear again his inspired eloquence.

The meeting had been at four o'clock on a bright May afternoon. The largest room available had been crowded to excess, and now the visitor was taking supper with James and Mary Ireland behind one of the principal shops in Ship Street.

The town had been strongly fortified by Queen Elizabeth, and its "seven streets and as many lanes" were enclosed in a wall fifteen feet high with four gates; but the ancient Church of St. Nicholas, patron saint of seafarers, was on the hill above, to serve as a beacon to home coming vessels.

The Irelands had been Puritans, but had gladly turned from the atmosphere of wordy gloom to the freer faith of the "Friends of Truth," and to entertain the genial and courteous William Penn was by them esteemed a great privilege.

They were talking of the meeting, and of some short communications by local Friends towards the end.

"I was particularly struck," said William Penn, "by a few words from a woman in a widow's hood, of the sustaining power of Divine grace in times of trouble."

"Ah! our good Damaris Holloway—she has indeed a right to speak on that subject, for although sore stricken, her cheerful patience has never failed. Her husband was a mariner, the owner of a good schooner trading from Shoreham, and three years ago it was lost off the French coast with all hands. Damaris has worked to support her children ever since. The boy, little Timothy, was a cripple, and never walked without crutches, and a month ago he died also. Only Tryphena is left, a good little maid, but too grave and womanly for her twelve years."

"I noted her also—a pale, little wistful face, with great brown eyes."

"She misses her brother sadly; they were constant companions. They would sit on the beach all day long, minding their mother's and

the neighbour's washing, spread to dry in the sun, and the wool for their mother's spinning. She buys fleeces from a shepherd on the Downs, and although it has been through the Fulling Mill at Edburton, it always needs washing and drying before it is dyed to spin. The two children would sit, hour after hour, picking and carding it, and talking to each other—no wonder the child misses Timothy."

"Poor little maid—she is just the age of my merry Letitia. I should not like to see her so unchildlike."

"Tryphena can read and write, her mother has taught her, and also to sew and knit, but I hardly know when; Damaris is always busy making meat pasties, for which she has quite a reputation, and spinning coarse wool for the thick stockings the fishermen wear in their sea-boots."

"Would it be too late to pay them a visit, as I have to leave so early to-morrow?"

"Oh, no. Damaris would be pleased; I will guide thee;" and soon the pair were at the open door of a low house in one of the narrow lanes.

Within was a warm glow from a great oven filled with blazing gorse in the side of the chimney corner, and at the table stood Damaris, in a large white apron, her sleeves rolled up to her shoulders,

diligently moulding substantial turnovers of bread dough, while little Tryphena sat carding wool, the square, iron-toothed combs looking far too heavy for her slender wrists.

The mother glanced up, and saw the guests. Not in the least flustered she welcomed them warmly, and bade her little daughter set chairs for them.

"I ask thy excuse for going on with my work," she said, "but the meeting this afternoon—a privilege I could not miss, has hindered me. The fishing fleet goes out with the tide near midnight, and they will be coming to buy my fresh pies to take with them; but the oven is just ready, and then I shall be at liberty."

The flames had died down, and only a glowing layer of charcoal covered the floor of the oven. Skilfully Damaris removed this with a long-handled, flat shovel, and dipping a green broom in water she rapidly swept it out. Another equally long-handled wooden shovel, called a peel, took up pie after pie, and landed each in its destined place, an iron door was shut, and Damaris was ready to talk to her visitors.

Meanwhile William Penn had been speaking to Tryphena. She was not shy, and answered his questions with sedate propriety.

Had she picked any cowslips this year? No, she never went farther outside the town than the

beach. Mother was so busy she could not go with her, or allow her to wander about with the rough fisher children. Did she love the country? Oh, yes—and once father—dear, kind father, had taken her over the Downs to Hollingbury Copse, and they heard a nightingale sing.

"My little maidens hear the nightingale all day long at Warminghurst, and would all night too, if they were not fast asleep."

"Friend Holloway," he said, turning to the mother; "I am going to Warminghurst for two nights. On Second day I expect to return this way, as my dear wife wishes to take our daughter Letitia to see an old friend at Rottingdean on our way to inspect her Kentish farms. Wilt thou trust this little maiden to my care for two days' play with my children in our country home? My Guli would welcome her, and we would take her to Thakeham meeting on First day."

Tryphena's great brown eyes opened their widest, the pale cheeks flushed pink, and she fairly gasped: "Oh, *mother!*" she said.

"Thou art very kind," said Damaris gratefully. "It would indeed be a treat for my little town bred cage-bird, and" (she added in a low voice), "I have longed to be able to provide her with a change of thought, for she was like a tender mother to our little Tim, and misses him sorely, although we can be thankful that his

sufferings are over. She has never been five miles from home, and it will be an event to be remembered for many a long day."

"My coach will be leaving Friend Ireland's at seven o'clock to-morrow morning, so bring her there; and now farewell."

Mary Ireland lingered behind to say, "It will be chilly riding in the early morning. I have a warm grey cloak and hood that my Submit has outgrown. I will send Betty round with it for the child."

This was true kindness, for Tryphena's wardrobe was very scanty, and, after the pies were baked and portioned out to the rough fisher lads who came to buy them, the mother spent much of the night washing, ironing and mending, so that the child should be tidily clothed for the great event.

A brighter May morning for a long drive could not be, and when they arrived in Ship Street William Penn stood smiling by the coach with two strong bay horses, and an old grey-haired coachman who adored his master.

"We will take good care of thy one ewe lamb, and bring her back on Second day." The last kiss was given, the little girl lifted in, her kind host followed and seated himself beside her, and away they drove, out of the town gate, and along the seaside road to the westward.

After a few kind words William Penn became absorbed in a pile of papers, but Tryphena needed no entertaining, as the coach rolled along and sight after sight caught her eager eye.

At Portslade they turned up a road over the open Downs, wild and lonely. The air above them was full of the song of larks, and presently William Penn, glancing up, pointed out to Tryphena, far away on a hill top, a group of the Great Bustards—birds as large as turkeys, which in those days abounded on the open hills.

On the summit of Beeding Hill there burst upon the child's eyes what seemed to her a vision of Paradise. The fair Weald of Sussex lay beneath them, with pastures of vivid green, great woods, just bursting into leaf, and the silver river Adur running through.

Down the steep hill they drove, over the bridge and by Bramber Castle, even then a ruin, and away through narrow lanes, their hawthorn hedges just bursting into flower, to the stately mansion of Warminghurst.

Never was a fifteen-mile drive more enjoyed. Tryphena sat in one glow of delight the whole way, noting every flower and bird, and fresh country sight and sound. Soon after ten o'clock they drove up to the stables, which still stand, solid and useful, although the house has long vanished.

Taking the child's hand, William Penn walked into the garden, where, under a cedar tree, they found the lovely lady who reigned there, Gulielma Penn, with her four children about her—Springett, Letitia, William and little Guli.

After loving greetings the little guest was presented, and most kindly welcomed, and Letitia was bidden to show her all the country sights that were so new to her; the cows, the black Sussex pigs, the new little colt, and Letitia's own quiet pony, on which Tryphena had her first ride. Then into the cool dairy, where Molly was churning, and gave them mugs of fresh milk. There were birds' nests in the garden, a great wicker cage of tame doves, a litter of playful puppies gambolling on the grass —oh, what a dream of delight it all was!

The child had been so well trained in pretty, respectful manners by her careful mother that she did not seem at all out of place in surroundings so different to her home.

Sunday morning was fresh and fair, and the whole family were packed into the roomy coach to drive to meeting, nearly five miles away, in Thakeham Meeting House, newly acquired, and adapted from a dwelling, the upper floor being cut away to give the needful height for a public room. Whether it then bore its present strange name of "The Blue Idol" we have no means of knowing.

The morning meeting was small, some score of country folk only, with the Warminghurst party. How sweet and quiet it was, with the door open to the green orchard, the coo of the turtle dove and the occasional trill of the nightingale alone breaking the stillness.

William Penn sat in the little gallery, with his wife beside him, in her silvery silken gown and hood, and also an elderly pair of country Friends. This old farmer, in a smock frock, first broke the silence with a homely lesson on the story of the Prodigal Son—such a West Sussex version of the parable, with the "far country" evidently represented to his mind by the nearest market town.

Then William Penn knelt in prayer, a prayer that Tryphena never forgot—so simple, so trustful, so full of thankfulness, so assured of the Love which hovered over the worshippers; it seemed to sanctify the whole of the long silence which followed.

When the meeting broke up, William Penn said, "Friends, I have a concern to appoint a meeting for this afternoon at three o'clock. Can you let your neighbours know?"

Eagerly those present responded. "I can tell each house in Coneyhurst," said an old woman. "I will walk round by Saucelands and Butterstalks," said a young girl; and her brother added, "I will take Coolham and Dragon's

Green" ; while a young man volunteered, "I have my nag here, and I will ride straight to Billingshurst, and tell all who are likely to come" ; and all departed on their errand, most willing of messengers.

Then a table was brought into the meeting room, and Guli Penn's sedate maid, Rachel, spread it with such fare as Tryphena had never seen—such chicken pies, fruit conserve tarts, and whipped cream. It was enjoyed by all, and would have been more so had not a rather grim looking farmer, John Longhurst, remained to consult William Penn as to whether he should emigrate with his family to the new colony, to whose involved statements the great man listened with patient courtesy.

He followed them also when they strolled out into the meadows—such meadows! yellow with cowslips, and round the hedges borders of azure bluebells, delicate windflowers and stitchwort, and bright crimson early vetch.

The children were wild with pleasure, and when two rival cuckoos tried to shout each other down they laughed and skipped with glee. William and Gulielma Penn looked on, smiling, but John Longhurst's long face grew longer, and he said sourly,

"Dost thou countenance such light behaviour in thy children?"

" It is as natural for children as for those lambs to race and jump about."

" Is it seemly to pick posies on the Sabbath ? "

" Quite as much as for thee and me to discuss the prospect of worldly gain in Pennsylvania, as we have been doing."

John Longhurst grunted, but returned to the charge : " Dost thou not believe in the Scriptural injunction to keep the Sabbath day holy ? "

" If thou means the Jewish Sabbath we should have kept it yesterday. To-day is First, not Seventh day. It is the day sanctified by the resurrection of our Lord from the grave. It is meet that it should be kept by holding on it our religious assemblies, but it is not the Jewish Sabbath, Friend Longhurst, nor are Christians bound by Jewish ceremonial law. I like my family to be happy on it, in sober fashion ; and as for that little town-bred maiden, it is meet that she should rejoice, for she never saw fields of cowslips before."

John Longhurst was silenced, and departed saying he would send his young people to the afternoon meeting, and do the milking himself for once.

William Penn strolled on with his family until half an hour before the time of the appointed meeting, when he left them, and walked away by himself into the wood, there, in its secluded

depths, to seek for renewal of spiritual power for the engagement before him.

Gulielma sat down on a fallen tree, and calling the children to her, said gently, "We will say over once more the new First day Psalms you have been learning to repeat to father this evening. Come, my little Guli, we are in green pastures and by still waters, so thine will be quite right to begin with;" and the small maiden stood before her and went through the verses slowly and reverently. The older children followed, and then the lady said, "Does our little visitor know one too?" "I can say Mother's favourite—the forty-sixth," said Tryphena, and began, "God is our Refuge and Strength"; acquitting herself quite as well as the more gently bred children.

Sobered by this quiet time, the little party returned to the Meeting House, and were met by Rachel. "Oh, mistress," she said, "the house is quite full already. The whole neighbourhood seems to be here. Shall I take the children up into the bedroom, which hath an opening above the gallery?"

A trapdoor had been opened, and Tryphena found herself looking down on crowds of simple country folk, every seat filled, except those left for William Penn and his wife. She passed at once to her place, and although it was still some

time before the appointed hour, a great hush fell on the assembly.

Just at three o'clock Tryphena, peeping down, saw William Penn stride up to the sunny doorway. He removed his hat, and began to speak as he crossed the threshold and walked up to the minister's gallery. His clear voice reached to the group above his head, and every ear listened entranced to that marvellous gift of inspired eloquence, as freely poured forth to these Sussex peasants as to his large audiences in London or Cambridge. But his practical mind remembered their simplicity, and he clothed his gospel truths in simple, homely language that a child could understand.

That sermon was to Tryphena the great crisis of her life. A well-trained, obedient child she had always been, but from that hour the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour and ever-present Friend became a reality to her, and the mainspring of conduct throughout her long life, although at the time she hardly realised how great a gift had come to her.

The meeting lasted long, and when it was over the people seemed loth to go, clustering round William Penn until all the rest were in the coach, and he stepped in, and drove away. "My father likes to be quiet after his meetings," said the thoughtful eldest boy, Springett, to Tryphena,

but the caution was unneeded for her heart was too full for speech.

At Worminghurst, after the pleasant evening meal, the Psalms were repeated, and the tired children sent early to bed.

On Monday morning the little guest bid farewell to the beautiful country home, and with Letitia and her parents started on the return drive to Brighthelmstone.

At the foot of Beeding Hill a trace horse was waiting to help pull coaches up the steep road, or bostel, as such hill tracks are called in Sussex. William Penn got out to walk, and helped his active Letitia to jump down also, but said smiling, "Friend Tryphena's weight will make little difference to the horses, so she can keep Friend Guli company." Up and up they wound, and once, when the horses stopped to take breath, Tryphena leaned from the window and looked back on the beautiful Weald.

"Dost thou think," she said, drawn out by the sympathetic face beside her, "that the Heavenly land where my father and little brother Tim are gone *can* be more lovely than this?"

"I think it is," said Guli Penn, smiling; "the country does look beautiful from here, certainly, but we know that down there are mud and thorns—aye, and sin and sorrow, and suffering,

in the houses too; and in the Heavenly home there is no more sorrow or pain."

"Mother often spoke of that when we lost Tim—he had had so much pain, poor little boy, and we used to rub his limbs, and rock him, and tell him stories—oh! it does seem as if he *must* want us there. He was always rather afraid of father, and of all strangers, and he could not sing, or play on a harp," and the brown eyes filled with tears.

"Dear little one," said Guli Penn, "thou mayest be sure that the dear Lord Jesus who called the children to Him on earth, will make them perfectly happy in His Heavenly home. I have three little ones there, and of this I feel the fullest assurance. Thy little Tim was lame and suffering—think of him as bounding over soft green hills, more beautiful than these, quite strong and well. Didst thou ever hear of Martin Luther?"

"I know he was a good man who helped people to read the Bible. Father had a book about him, but it was too hard for me."

"I saw a copy of a letter once which he wrote to his little boy Hans, to encourage him to be good, and love the Lord. He said that for good boys there was a lovely garden, full of trees with wonderful fruit, and that they had beautiful little horses to ride, with golden saddles, and shot

with golden crossbows. He wished his little son to believe that heaven is all that is delightsome, prepared by the dear Saviour for them that love Him."

Tryphena drew a long breath. "How Tim would like that," she said. "All these beautiful, beautiful days I have kept thinking, 'Oh, if I could only tell Tim about it all!' He did love stories, and I never had anything very nice to tell him, but if he is *quite* happy he will not need them."

"Thou must tell them to thy dear mother; she will like to hear."

"Oh, she will—so much! As we sit at work I shall tell her over and over about the drive, and Warminghurst, and the beautiful meadows at Thakeham, and the meeting, and all your kindness. If I live to be a hundred years old, I do not expect ever to have such another time. You have given me a treasure for my whole life."

"My dear husband loves little maids, and I am very glad he brought thee with him, and if thou remembers his First-day discourse, thy visit will not have been in vain."

Here the coach stopped for the others to get in, and the drive over the Downs was all too short for Tryphena.

Her mother could hardly believe that three

days' absence could have improved the child so much. She actually looked plumper, her eyes were bright, her mouth had lost its sad droop, and she poured out happy memories by the hour together.

It was indeed the time of her life, for in after years she seldom went beyond the bounds of her native town, but supported her mother in her old age by their useful trades of baking and spinning; diligently attending all meetings of Friends within her reach, and doing many a kindness among the poor and suffering around her.

She lived to be very old, and told the story of her ride in William Penn's coach to another Friend of exceptionally great age, whom many now living remember, so that only one long life lies between the present day and the real Tryphena Holloway.

BECKY'S BOOK

A Glimpse of Quaker Life in Homespun Days

1714

The sun was near its setting on a sultry June evening in the year 1714, when two travellers, weary and dust-covered, were plodding along the narrow Surrey lanes. Far too rough and narrow for wheels were many of these lanes, so that riding on horseback was the inevitable mode of travelling, even for elderly people, and this couple were mounted on horses so strong and good as to proclaim them in comfortable circumstances, although their quaint raiment was of Puritanica plainness with no pretension to gentility about it.

Benedictus Martin was a yeoman; honest, thrifty, and much respected, with a ruddy, sun-tanned face, striaghtforward grey eyes, and Saxon fairness of hair. His great roan mare carried, besides his portly weight, a well-filled pair of saddle-bags, but their pace was but slow, and for esser journeys she was well accustomed to the pillion saddle, with the mistress mounted behind the master; but as they had just accomplished a journey to London—fully thirty miles away—the

second rider was now mounted on an equally good horse by herself.

A remarkable woman was Susannah Martin, in spite of the homely simplicity of her bringing up. A gentle placidity made the face beneath the plain riding hood motherly and attractive, but the broad forehead and keen brown eyes told of an intellect far beyond the average; the combination of qualities making her the "Mother in Israel" in her little circle which she is recorded to have been in a quaint book of religious memoirs, published in 1735 under the title of *Piety Promoted.*

"We are almost home now, wife," said Benedictus, "I can spy the Hunts Green chimneys between the elm-trees," adding, as his wife looked eagerly forward, "Ah, thy heart has been here all the time, in spite of the fine friends and fine things we have seen in London town. Thou art ever anxious lest harm should come to thy two chicks."

"Nay, Benedict," said the wife smiling, "not unduly anxious, for I have ever felt a strong sense of the Divine protection being over our dear daughters—and Aunt Mary Martin guards them well, but I feel some natural impatience to see them again, and I know that thou dost the same."

A turn of the lane brought them into full view of a comfortable red farmhouse, its gabled roof covered with the picturesque stone slabs common in the district, mossy and lichen stained, with a

goodly array of well-thatched barns and sheds behind it.

Two slender girlish figures who were busying themselves among the herbs, and sweet-scented, old-fashioned flowers in the low walled garden before the house, paused to listen as the sound of hoofs fell on their ears. Then recognising the riders, they flew to open the gate with such eager haste that the prim linen cap of the elder girl fell to the ground, showing an abundant crop of fair hair. Molly Martin was her father over again, honest, sturdy, and practical; while Rebekah who was but sixteen, was slender and dark like the mother, but with a dreamy, unsatisfied look in her soft brown eyes. Both gave a warm welcome to their parents, and if the embraces, after the travellers had alighted at the horse-block of massive mossy stones, were more formal and reverential than modern parenthood exacts, they were none the less hearty. Benedict Martin followed the lad who came to take the horses to the stable to give special directions for the welfare of the animals, after a journey which seemed to these simple country folk as great an undertaking as a trip across the Atlantic would be nowadays. Busy Molly flew off to make some addition to the supper table, while Becky clung to her mother, and went up the wide oak staircase with her to see that all was ready for her comfort in the quaint

bed-chamber above. By the time that Molly's ham and eggs were ready, a goodly group was gathered round the massive oak table in the large, low-pitched farm kitchen, for man and maid ate with the master's family in those primitive days.

Aunt Mary Martin, a vigorous old dame who had taken charge of the household in the absence of her nephew and his wife, had the place of honour, while "below the salt" were modestly grouped a white-haired old retainer, Peter by name, who had faithfully served three generations of Martins; two stout, red-armed maids; and several bashful, shock-headed lads.

A farm in the eighteenth century was almost self-supporting, and little upon that homely table came from other sources. The big brown loaf was of home-grown wheat, ground at the windmill on the neighbouring heath; the bacon, butter, and cheese, and also the mead and cider which were the universal beverages, were all produced and manufactured under the watchful eyes of the good yeoman and his wife. The farm being freehold, they were accounted to be well supplied with this world's goods, and their two daughters as somewhat of heiresses.

The talk over the supper table brought out strongly the characters of the two maidens—Molly was eager to tell the home news; Rebekah to hear all her father and mother could tell her of

the great world which lay beyond the hedgerows of Hunts Green.

"It is good to be home again," said Benedictus, "it feels so sweet and quiet after the sulphurous air and racket of London; and just now, because poor Queen Anne lies at the point of death, all the tongues are wagging as to who will be her successor."

"Ah, poor Queen," said the gentle voice of the mother, "not one of all her many children lives to take her place on the throne. I doubt me there is too much both of pampering and restraint in the life of a Court to be wholesome for the little ones."

"And who do they say will be king, father?" asked Rebekah, eagerly.

"The Queen's second cousin, George of Hanover, I expect," said Benedictus, "but they say he is but dull, and speaks only German—I cannot say that I fancy him as a ruler."

"But thou would not wish to see the Stuarts back, father?"

"Nay, nay, Becky, we must have a king who is no papist, and who will allow liberty of conscience, and keep his given word, which the Stuart kings could never do. I only trust that the question will be settled without bringing war and bloodshed on our poor country," and Benedictus poured out a second cup of cider with a grave face.

The pause was broken by Molly. "Father, neighbour Bonwick wishes to buy the sorrel colt; he has been here twice about it. Thou won't sell him, wilt thou? He will make a beautiful nag for Becky and me when he is broken in!"

The father laughed, and gave no promise, but proceeded to ask various questions as to how the farm had fared in his absence, concluding with:

"Had Peter sheared the sheep?"

"Indeed he has," answered Aunt Mary Martin, "and what do you think this good Molly of yours has done? She will never let the grass grow under her feet! The fleeces were barely off the sheep's backs when she went to work with the maids, washing and drying, and carding and spinning, until they have yarn enough for the couple of large blankets which were needed before winter."

The parents commended the blushing Molly, and she further explained to her mother: "Thou knows that Becky and I both needed new tuck aprons, so we span the black sheep's fleece first of all, and have already taken it to weaver Miles to make into linsey woolsey for us, and when it comes back we mean to make our old aprons into a warm gown for widow Bates' little Nance."

This project being cordially approved, the great-aunt went on to commend Rebekah, for she was a just woman, although Molly was decidedly her favourite.

"And Becky here has been spinning some of that very soft flax. I never saw a finer or evener thread. It will make a beautiful lawn for kerchiefs or caps. She has also stilled enough peppermint and other strong waters to dose the neighbourhood; and they both manage the dairy and the cheese like two old women! They are a credit to thy training, niece Susannah!"

The mother coloured with pleasure, but only said simply,

"The Lord hath granted them good understandings and strong healthy bodies. I trust that they will ever use their powers in His service."

When the supper table was cleared, and the servants had withdrawn, some London presents were brought out for the girls—enough of soft grey camlet to make a gown for each, and two black silk riding hoods—simple enough, but with an air of town elegance in their shape which enchanted Molly, who tried to make a mirror of the bright warming pan which hung by the casement.

But a convex copper lid, however brilliantly polished, is not flattering to a fresh young face, so the hood was transferred to the hand again and held up, and chattered about until the father, turning to the quieter younger daughter, bade her fetch his saddle bags, as he had something

there which would suit her fancy as well as the finery did Molly's.

"Oh, father! a new book?" she exclaimed, with rising colour.

"Aye, Becky, and a rare good one that I bought in a shop in Gracechurch Street the very day it was published—ah, here it is," and he drew forth a thick volume covered with brown leather. "It is called *The History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood.* Dost thou remember seeing him at thy uncle Thompson's the day that I took thee to Reigate on the pillion?"

Indeed Becky did remember. That journey to Reigate had been one of the few events of her quiet life, and the sight of the benevolent old man who had written many books, was no light matter to the intelligent young soul, ever thirsting for knowledge, and finding it hard to come by in her farm-house home. Besides, was not Thomas Ellwood the author of the lines which both girls had learnt at their mother's knee, and even yet often repeated to her of a quiet First day evening :—

> "Oh, that mine eyes might closed be
> To what becomes me not to see,
> That deafness may possess my ear
> To what becomes me not to hear?"

"There is the book, dear daughter, but put it away now in the best parlour, for it is bedtime. When the long dark evenings come, thou shalt

read it aloud to us. Summertime, with the cheese and the hay, and the harvest, is no time for books on a farm."

"May I not read it before winter?" asked Rebekah, looking rather blank.

"Oh, yes, if none of the tasks which thy mother sets thee are neglected. I thought of thee, little bookworm, when I bought the volume."

Slowly Rebekah carried off the treasure, with many peeps between the leaves before she could leave it on the side table of solid, polished oak.

She saw that her father had taken the precaution to write both at the beginning and end of the volume "Benedictus Martin, his book, 1714," and she placed it with the score or so of soberly-bound volumes which formed the whole library of the family, except the great Bible which had a little table to itself in the farm kitchen.

How often had Rebekah read and re-read those few books! She loved the quiet best parlour, with its pannelled walls, sanded floor, white linen curtains, and its corner cupboard with the small store of china and glass for great occasions, the common table service being of pewter and horn.

What changes has time wrought! That best parlour is now the parlour of a farm bailiff. Modern gimcracks of all descriptions crowd the corner cupboard, photographic portraits and gorgeous oleographs hang on the pannelled walls,

and a cheap sewing machine has taken the place of Susannah Martin's dainty spinning wheel.

Many an evening during that busy summer did Becky steal away to her precious book. How fascinating it was to her ; from Thomas Ellwood's schooldays, when, for his mischievous pranks, "he wore out more birch than most boys;" through his troubled youth, when for the cause of liberty of conscience he suffered cruel imprisonment. How he became reader to the blind poet, John Milton, and ventured to suggest to him that *Paradise Lost* should be followed by *Paradise Regained.* His adventures while acting as escort to the fair heiress, Gulielma Springett, afterwards the wife of the founder of Pennsylvania ; his deliberate wooing of Mary Ellis, and happy life with her ; and even the laborious, and rather doggerel, poems which he wrote from time to time—all was delightful to the unsophisticated Becky.

Molly by no means approved of this absorption of her sister. She considered that studious habits were mere idleness, although she, as well as Becky, had been given the best education their parents could arrange for them at their remote farm.

Finding that no teasing would move her young sister, Molly resolved to administer a reproof in writing.

Taking advantage of Becky's absence, she having accompanied her mother on one of Mrs. Martin's many errands among the sick and poor, Molly slipped into the best parlour, and taking a quill in her unaccustomed fingers, she proceeded to write in a neat, cramped hand, lengthways of the cover of the cherished new book, the words "Go to the ant, thou s——." But, just as she laboriously completed the letter s, a cheery voice said, "Well, this is something new, to find Molly among the scribes! What art writing, my daughter?"

Molly started and blushed as the worthy yeoman looked over her shoulder, and read the unfinished sentence.

"A good admonition, truly, but Thomas Ellwood was no sluggard, nor is Molly Martin either, for I heard thy voice in the yard before four of the clock this morning. We have no sluggards here at Hunts Green that I know of, so why write it?"

"Well, father—of late it has seemed to me," said Molly, hesitating, "that Becky is growing into a little bit of one."

"And so thou scribbles in my new book, and quotes King Solomon to reprove her? I think that thou might leave the task of admonishing to thy good mother, who never neglects a needful reproof. But I have not seen any need. Rebekah

is an industrious and thrifty maiden, if not quite such a fly-about as thou. What household work dost thou accuse her of neglecting ? "

" It is not housework, father, but spinning. When Aunt Mary was here she got carpenter Simmons to make us each a fine dower-chest as her gift. She said we were to fill them as soon as possible with good linen, for every maid ought to lay up for the time when she may have no leisure to spin. Our flax field yielded so well last year that mother said we might have as much as we could spin at leisure times—and now Becky comes mooning in the parlour over this book, and will not spin a thread ! "

" A store against the time that thou are wedded, eh ? But who knows whether you may not be two elderly maiden sisters, living together at Hunts Green with nothing to do but to spin ? "

Molly looked rather taken aback, and then dimpled demurely, remembering a certain young farmer from the Surrey hills who was most ingenious in devising frequent errands to the house.

" But thou dost not object to our having the flax, father ? " she said.

" No, certainly, I like you to be busy and thrifty ; but do not tease Becky about it. She is three years younger than thee, and something of a child still—and do not finish thy text in the book—I like not such use of Bible words, although

I have been tempted myself to alter a text when I hear too careful housewives talk of spinning, and say, ' A woman's life consisteth not in the abunddance of linen which she possesseth.' Now get thy hood, and come out with me to see how the calves are faring in the five acres."

When the winter came the book was read aloud to the family gathered round the great wood fire, on which they chiefly depended for light for spinning and knitting, the reader being seated close to a home-made rush light, which yielded but a feeble flame.

Benedictus sometimes nodded, but his wife found it intensely interesting, and even Molly enjoyed the reading, as she whirred the wheel and wound the linen yarn.

Her motive for industry was stronger now, for she was betrothed to the young farmer; but although he was a son-in-law after their own heart, her parents wished for a year or two's delay before their young Molly should take upon herself the responsibilities of matronhood. So the dower chest was filled to overflowing with good tablecloths, sheets and curtains, and even linen gowns for the summer; all the produce of that field on the farm which in summer waved its lovely blue blossoms in the sunshine, and is to this day called " the Flax Field."

Rebekah stayed with her parents for some years,

a quiet, retiring maiden, but wonderfully efficient and kind-hearted, until her good qualities were discovered by a worthy and prosperous young man, who owned a flour mill, with a good dwelling-house beside it, on the banks of one of the small, sluggish rivers of Sussex.

Thither Rebekah consented to go, not without qualms at leaving her parents (for the new home was at the alarming distance of twenty miles from the old one), but they were still healthy and active, and had moreover an orphan niece who needed a home.

The last First day before the marriage, as they were sitting quietly in the panelled parlour, Benedictus said to his daughter, taking up the cherished book, "Here, Becky, my child, take this with thee, and read it to thy Thomas. I bought it chiefly to please thee, although I wrote my name in it."

Rebekah took it gladly, and packed it among the lavender-scented linen in the big chest, which was now well filled, ready to go to the new home.

When she took it out, while unpacking and arranging her possessions, she laid it in her best parlour. Suddenly the thought struck her that as it was now hers, she must write in it her new name and abode—yes, and she would add a confession of faith also, so that her new relations might know what Master she loved and followed.

So in large clear writing she made the inscription :—

"Rebekah Rickman is my name,
And England is my nation,
Barcomb is my dwelling place,
And Christ is my salvation."

There it stands still, in ink brown and faded, in the quaint old book.

More than a century after the young bride brought it to her new home, her descendants having died or drifted away, there was a sale of old furniture at the mill house, and an old man who bought the books happened to recognise the names, and sent it—not to the great-great-grandchildren of Rebekah, but of Molly Martin.

The surname has died out, but the old farm, the old books, the antique silver spoons, and, above all, the inheritance of their good name, still remain to the descendants of Benedictus and Susannah Martin and their two daughters.

ABRAHAM'S OAK

1725

THERE was a busy scene one brilliant April morning of the year 1725 in a place that was normally a deep solitude in the forest region of Northern Sussex. All around the ground was carpeted with bright spring flowers, anemones, primroses, goldilocks, and large dog violets. The air was full of bird notes. The song of the ox-eye tit, exhorting his hearers to "Set your beans! Set your beans!" mingled with the cry of the wryneck, locally called "the flawing bird," because it is always in evidence when oak trees are flawed, or stripped of their bark. This task was going on now. A dozen giant oaks, all but one that were large enough to be worth felling in this particular copse, lay prone in all directions, gaunt and white, for the bark was set up in long rows to dry for the tanner. One of the trimmed trunks had been laboriously hoisted, with the primitive machinery of those days, on to a timber waggon, and drawn outside the wood by eight strong red oxen, who were now taking their noonday rest, standing like statues under their

heavy wooden yokes, except for the steady working of their lower jaws, one of the advantages of an ox team being that they carry internal provision for the day, and so need no nosebags.

A dozen sturdy labourers were also taking their meal, before pulling down the last tree in the wood which, its magnificent trunk nearly severed, still stood erect, its yellow green young leaves, and catkins which would never come to acorns, standing up bravely against the cloudless blue sky.

A little apart, on a fallen trunk, were seated the seller and buyer of the timber, the latter a keen-eyed middle-aged man, whose garb, though of the plainest Quaker cut, showed that he was a well-to-do tradesman from a town, as did the strong bay horse which was allowed to graze in an adjoining meadow, while its owner, John Deane, shared the bread and cheese and cider of the owner of the woodland.

John Prier was a younger man, a simple Sussex yeoman, but behind the sturdy honesty of his face was the thoughtful refinement which genuine Christianity brings with it. Leaning against his knee was his only child, a boy of nine years, a little copy of his father in his leather breeches and long-tailed homespun coat, an excellent specimen of a rosy, chubby country lad.

" Go down to the stream and pick thy mother

a posy, Abie, my boy—Friend Deane and I are going to talk business," said John Prier, when the meal was finished. " But I want to see the last tree fall—thou wilt call me, when they are ready, won't thou, father ? " said little Abraham, eagerly. " Oh, yes, thou shalt see it fall," and away went the boy, jumping gaily down the steep slope to where the edge of a little brook was gay with marsh marigolds.

The two men went soberly to work, reckoning the value of the oak timber.

" When my old father died last year," said John Prier, " he left me the farm as the eldest son, but I have to pay the portions of the others. I want to do it as soon as possible—brother Edward needs capital for his dairy business at Dorking—a fine team of cows he has, and could do with more. Then sisters Susan and Lydia's husbands have a struggle to get a living from their small farms, so I felt it best to have a broke of the timber. Job Humphrey, the wheelwright of Crawley, bought two fine ash trees and three elms, and when thou pays for these oaks I shall only owe them a small sum each, which I hope to work off by degrees from the farm ; but, as thou knows, ready money is not plentiful, and my Nancy, though her price is above rubies as a wife and mother, had no portion of this world's goods."

" If thou wilt fell those six large oaks up in the home paddock next year, I will buy them. The one near the house is a fine, straight bit of timber."

" Nay, nay, Friend Deane—those trees I cannot part with. Five of them shelter the homestead from the north-east, and as for Abraham's oak, as we call it, it is as good as a play-fellow for my lonely boy. Ever since he was a baby he has amused himself under its shadow, where his mother could keep her eye on him from her kitchen window. I have known him pick up nigh a bushel of acorns from that tree alone, when he was not more than five years old—nay, we must not cut Abie's oak—unless—it was always a desire of mine to give him a good education. That would be an inheritance that no one could take from him. To send him to a good school I might even cut his oak."

John Deane was surprised. He knew that honest John Prier was no scholar himself. He could not even write his own name, although he could read well, and had the marvellous memory of those who have never trusted to note books.

" Why should Abie learn more than his worthy parents ? " he asked.

" George Fox always upheld good, plain schooling for young Friends, and there is a rare good school at Brighthelmstone, kept by John Grover.

Friend Stapley says he is making a fine scholar of his lad Anthony, and that there is a real Friendly influence among them all. Thou sees in our Society we never know on whom the Lord may lay a gift in the ministry, and a call to public service—surely our sons and daughters should be prepared for that ? "

" Book learning is not needed for a Friend to preach to edification, if he has the true Seed within him. Our Lord's first disciples were simple fishermen of Galilee."

" Yes, Friend Deane, but Peter, and James, and John must have had some earthly learning, as well as heavenly wisdom, before they wrote those epistles which give us such blessed teaching. Many of the unlearned have been greatly used for good in our Society, but we need the scholars too. How useful Friend Ellwood has been in making the writings for all the new Meeting Houses ! And dost not thou remember what our elders have told us of William Penn's wonderful power in preaching ? He made good use of his book-learning ; and his Guli, what an influence she had in her gentle courtesy to all ! After she died, when the news came that William was to take as second wife Hannah Callowhill, of Bristol, my father was appointed by the Monthly Meeting to enquire into his clearness of other marriage engagements. I remember father saying there

was little chance of William Penn looking at any of our homely Sussex maidens, after such a gentlewoman as Guli, and I reckon that Hannah Penn was of the same sort. I trust that Abraham will always be an honest yeoman on the old farm, but that is no reason why he should not have all the book learning I can get for him."

"Well, I hope thou wilt manage it, for he is a bright lad; and now I will go and call him, for I see my men are ready to bring down the last tree." And John Deane strode away among the hazels towards the dell where Abie had disappeared.

He was startled by a sudden crash. By some inexplicable accident the great tree swerved, rocked, and fell over at quite a different point to that arranged for, and John Deane saw the sturdy form of John Prier struck down by some of the lesser branches, and pinned face downward on the soil. With frantic haste he and his men tried to lift the branches, but in vain, and they were just beginning to saw them away when poor little Abraham rushed up, crying pitifully that father was killed.

"No, my boy, I trust not," said kind John Deane. "We will soon get him out, and thee take my hat, and fill it with water at the brook, to revive him."

Away ran Abie, and soon returned, carefully carrying the felt hat full of water, and by that

time John Prier was lying clear of the boughs, leaning against his friend, and gasping painfully. They bathed his face and hands, and in answer to the boy's eager questions, he murmured, " not much hurt ; only dazed like." After a little time he tried to rise, but sank back. " I seem to have lost my legs," he said. At a word from their master the strong workmen laid their coats on a new hurdle, and, gently lifting him, carried him through the fields to the house, and laid him on the great four-post bed, with checked linen curtains, where he lay helpless for many a day, devotedly nursed by his good wife, Nancy.

John Deane brought a doctor from Horsham ; but the country practitioner of those days knew little of the human frame, and could do nothing to restore the lost power in the lower limbs. By-and-by, he managed to sit up in a great chair, which was wheeled to the broad lattice window in full view of Abraham's oak.

Bravely he bore the deprivation ; the sweet strength of his character showing in his determination that no murmuring word should pass his lips to add to Nancy's heavy burdens, or damp the happy spirit of his boy.

His hands had always been remarkably clever ones, and he soon began to employ them, plaiting straw for hats and baskets, knitting stockings, and even making straw skeps, not only for

Nancy's, but for their neighbour's bees. His library only numbered three volumes besides his large Bible, but Friends near were glad to lend him any that they possessed, and in that first winter he patiently taught Abraham, until the little fellow could read aloud as fluently as his father.

John Prier's little son was his chief companion, for Nancy was obliged to oversee the farm, manage her dairy, and supplement the rather dull intellects of Seth and Gainor, a brother and sister whom John's mother had taken from the parish thirty years before and trained into great industry and faithfulness.

So eighteen months went by, and one fine autumn day, when Abie was reading to his father, a man's step came up the oaken stairs, and John Deane's pleasant voice greeted them both.

"Friends at Monthly Meeting told me thou wishes to see me, John."

"Aye, I do, and it is kind of thee to come so soon."

"Oh, I had a leisure afternoon, so I brought my little Mary on the pillion for a birthday treat —she is eight years old to-day. She is out under thy oak, Abie. Wilt thou go and play with her while father and I have our talk?"

"Say thy last texts to Friend Deane before thou goest, my son."

Abie stood up, put his hands behind him, and spoke clearly and distinctly:

"Owe no man anything save to love one another." "Provide things honest in the sight of all men"—and then bounded away, eager for the rare pleasure of a play-fellow.

"Those words are a legacy that I want to leave my boy," said the invalid, wistfully. "I feel I shall not be with him long, John Deane."

"Hast thou any fresh ailment, then?"

"No, but my strength steadily goes. I feel I have come to the place of this Pilgrim in this wonderful book of John Bunyan's, which Susannah Martin lent me," and he put a white, wasted finger on the passage in the open *Pilgrim's Progress*—"There came a summons that he must prepare for a change of life, for his Master was not willing that he should be so far from Him any longer."

"If my Master needs me elsewhere I am glad to go; but I naturally think of my wife and child—I want to leave them clear of debt, so I sent for thee to ask if thy offer to buy the six home oak trees stands—then I could pay off all family claims and leave Nancy with a clear freehold to pass on to Abie."

"What! Abie's oak too? What of thy plans for his education?"

John Prier smiled sadly. "That has gone the

way of many earthly hopes," he said. "His mother could ill spare him to go to Brighthelmstone—and will even less when she is left alone. She will teach him to follow his inward Guide, and that is better than book learning. Now, canst thou cut those oaks in the spring?"

"Certainly I can. There is always a demand for such good timber. Only last week there was one of the King's shipbuilders in Horsham inquiring for it, but he gets none from me for ships of war, and I am sure thou wilt feel the same. But I have a friend at Shoreham who builds large hoys for the coasting trade, and the bigger sorts of fishing craft. Many a good tree I have sold to him. And my men fill in their spare time with making dressers and chests, which sell well in Horsham. I shall be glad to pay thee a good price for those trees."

"That is a weight off my mind. Nancy will, I feel sure, be able to get an honest living until Abie is old enough to take to the farm. She is a good manager, and thrifty and industrious, as thou knows."

"Indeed she is—I saw her as I rode in, busy over the cider mill."

"Ah, we turn many an honest penny with that. Squire Brown sent a whole waggon load of apples to be crushed to-day, and Seth's hands, and Nancy's wits between them manage it

capitally. That mill was the last thing I made before my accident, little thinking that I should never see the juice flow from it; but I am glad I finished it that spring, for it brings in a little ready money, besides making our own cider."

Meanwhile, under the oak, the children were supremely happy. The acorns were dropping all around them, often with a thud on head or back, which brought shouts of happy laughter. A wooden Sussex trug basket was soon full to the brim.

"Now I must take it to the pit in the stack-yard," said Abie.

"Let me help thee carry it," pleaded the little maiden.

"No, thank thee, Mary. I like something heavy to carry," and the sturdy little man stumped off with his load.

"Seth has dug such a big pit for the acorns this year, and I mean to fill it right up," he explained.

"What can you want so many acorns for?" asked the visitor.

"Oh, for the pigs next winter, and the sheep too. They get sweet after they have sprouted under the wet straw we put over them. When there is a long spell of snow and frost I don't know what we should do without them—and my oak grows such big acorns, twice as large as those in

the back pasture. I must go there now. Will thee come too ? "

" Oh, yes. Do thee pick them up every day ? "

" I must get them out of the way of the cows. Last year Neighbour Bonwick's white heifer ate so many whole that she died—can't let that happen to *our* cows," said the little farmer, as he began to re-fill his trug under the fine, tall oaks at the back of the barn.

When they came back to the house, Nancy greeted the little visitor kindly. " Take her up to thy father, Abie ; he would like to see her."

Shyly, the child stood before the invalid, but he soon put her at her ease.

" Look what I am making, Mary. We were sorry when the poor old black cow pulled off her crumpled horn in a gate, but it has just come right to make buttons for the winter coat for Abie that his mother is spinning out of the black sheep's fleece." Home-made buttons ! Yet so delicately cut and polished by the clever white fingers that they were not at all to be despised, and would be cherished as no shop-bought buttons could ever be. The little girl was interested, and was soon chatting gaily, the sick man's eyes resting on her rosy face and flaxen hair with pleasure.

Nancy came up with a tray, and the visitors eat with enjoyment her brown bread and honeycomb,

and drank cider freshly pressed from the apples which had mellowed in the farm orchard.

Then the strong bay horse was brought to the mounting block, and Mary perched on the pillion, holding fast to a strap round her father's waist, and they jogged away along narrow lanes in the sunset.

"Hast thou had a happy time, my little one?"

"Oh, yes, father. Thank thee so much for bringing me. I like Abie Prier to play with—only it was not play—it was real work, picking up the acorns for the winter. And isn't it grand to have a big oak of his own? The acorns are twice as large as those in the meadow. Abie has a young oak tree as tall as himself from an acorn from it which he planted in the garden when he was a little boy."

"When he was little! What is he now, then?" said the father, laughing.

"He is ten and a half," said eight-year-old Mary, impressively.

"I am glad to hear that he has a sapling, for, Mary, these are the last acorns that fine oak will grow. Friend Prier is obliged to sell it, and it will be cut down in the spring."

"Oh, poor Abie! He will be so sorry. Why must they sell it, father?"

"There is some money owing to his sisters and

brother that the honest man must pay. I think he is right, but they will miss the oak."

"I shall miss it when we go there. Abie has a swing on it, and has made a little farmyard round the roots—oh, it does seem too bad that the oak must be killed"—and the little voice became quite doleful.

"Well, we will keep it to make furniture of. How would thee like a nice box for thy clothes. with 'M. D.' in brass nails?" said the father, cheerily.

"Oh, I should like that! Mother said I shall have a box, with a lock and key, when I am twelve, for my very own."

"Well, that is about the time the oak timber will be seasoned for use. It is a long while for a little maiden to wait, but we won't forget that thy box is to be made from the planks of Abraham's oak."

They jogged on in silence for a mile or more, and then the little voice from behind the broad back began diffidently,

"Father, dear, it is *Abie's* oak, not mine. Ought not he to have the box instead of me? When he is a man he would like to see it, and to remember what a fine oak he used to have."

"Well, well, perhaps we shall manage to spare planks for two boxes when the time comes," said John Deane, indulgently, as he turned his

horse's head towards the Carfax, as the central square of Horsham is still called, and where yet may be seen the stocks and bull ring—relics of the bad old times of cruelty to man and beast, against which John Deane and other Friends protested in vain.

It was a blow to Abraham when he was told that his oak must be felled, but he was a sage little man, and quite understood his father's explanations that his uncle and aunts must have their patrimony.

His Uncle Edward, visiting them from Dorking at the right season, took pains to move the sapling very carefully from the garden, where already it unduly shaded Nancy's herb bed. It was planted in the paddock near the mother tree, and strongly fenced to protect it from cattle, and the interest of watching the growth of the young oak was some consolation for the loss of the old.

It was but natural that when John Deane's men came to fell the trees that Nancy should keep her boy safely by his father's bed side. The invalid noted the six crashes, as the great trees fell, and when the price was paid, which settled all family claims, and quite a nice sum remained for Nancy, he felt he had no more care left in this world. When the month of May came he peacefully passed away, and the weary frame was laid in the green graveyard at Ifield Meeting House.

Thither, after her busy week's work, Nancy loved to go on First days, riding on a pillion behind her little son, whose legs were short for grey Dobbin's broad back.

Seated in the grey stone-built Meeting House, and surrounded by other simple, devout souls, she found true consolation in her loneliness, and much neighbourly kindness from the group of Friends who had appreciated John Prier's sterling character.

After meeting she would always slip into the graveyard, while Abie brought out the horse and waited for her by the stone mounting block.

One day she was followed by Susannah Martin, the motherly minister, to whom all Ifield Meeting turned for help in times of need. She laid her hand on the bowed shoulders of the young widow. "Thy dear one is not here, Nancy," she said, tenderly; "not here, but risen, as was said of his Divine Master. Thou must think of him as satisfied, having awaked with His likeness."

"I do, I do, Friend Martin," sobbed Nancy; "but I do miss him so. He was so wise-like, and up to the last would give me counsel about every little thing. Then there is Abie—he is such a bright lad, and I such a poor scholar. I am afraid he will forget what his father taught him."

"Dost thou encourage him to keep up his reading?"

" Oh, yes. He reads a chapter in the Bible to me and the servants every night after supper, and more on First days. But often 'tis all about battles and slaughter, and last night about wheels full of eyes,' that neither I, nor Seth and Gainor could make head or tail of."

Susannah Martin smiled—she had little grandsons of her own. " I must put some marks in Friend Abraham's Bible," she said. " Meanwhile tell him to read to thee in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They tell what we poor mortals are ever needing to hear."

During this chat Abie was sitting on the horse block enjoying the weekly treat which never failed to come out of Susannah Martin's basket —an apple turnover, a couple of big pears grown against the walls of Hunts Green, or fleed cakes— and who made such fleed cakes as Friend Martin ? —pounded and rolled into quite ethereal lightness and flakiness ! Old Benedictus Martin was always ready to wait when his wife had some concern to comfort the sorrowful, and he amused himself with the staid, old-fashioned remarks of the child as to the state of the crops, and farming prospects.

When Nancy returned, he began, " Thy son tells me thou wants to get rid of those two brindled steers. I am sending some to Reigate fair on Third day. Shall I send thine with them ? "

"Oh, thank thee; but they are that wild, having been in the lonely forest pasture, that I hardly know how Seth would get them along the high road—like March hares, he says they are."

"Then send that red heifer, Judy, that I saw Abie riding on, for company—she is quiet enough. Abie, thee could help drive the beasts, have thy dinner with us, and ride her home with Seth, though I can't say I envy thee thy nag!" So the matter was settled, and the two pairs of Friends left the Meeting House in opposite directions.

Years passed by, and one bright autumn day, Abraham, now a tall, strong lad of fifteen, walked into the Carfax at Horsham leading grey Dobbin with well-piled panniers of farm produce. He stopped at the side door of the substantial brick house which stood in front of John Deane's timber yard.

The mistress came out with a kind welcome. "We were particularly wanting to see thee, Abie, Can thee come back to dinner, when Mary will be home from school?"

"Thank thee—yes. I have brought the russet apples and mushroom catchup thee ordered, and here is a little crock of honey, which my mother sent for Mary."

"Did her hives yield well this year?"

"Yes, very well. I have two big crocks of honey in the panniers, which the apothecary ordered, and two sheepskins below, to steady them, which I must take to the tanner's, and I am to get some salt, and a few other things. Then I will come back and put Dobbin up here."

The hard-working farm lad felt it quite a holiday as he led his quiet horse through the streets, for it was market day, and Horsham had awakened from its normal sleepy quiet.

The dinner at the Deane's was also a treat, for Ann Deane's great pudding was of beef, which seldom came on a farmhouse table, and Mary chattered gaily with her old play-fellow, telling him she had something very particular to show him presently. She made a mysterious journey into the best parlour, and then came back to lead him there, followed by her amused parents. On the table stood a beautiful new clothes box, of polished oak, with a handsome lock of engraved brass, and "M. D." in brass-headed nails.

"What a nice box, Mary. Did thy father have it made for thee?"

"Yes—and, Abie, it was made out of thy own oak!"

The colour came into Abraham's brown cheeks. "Is it really? How nice for thee to have something made of the dear old tree!"

"Ah, but that is not all I have to show thee," and a covering was whisked off a second box of the same size and shape, with the inscription, "A. P., 1732," deeply cut into the solid oak below the lock.

"There, Abie! That is for thy very own! Father had his best carpenter make them for us."

The boy stood speechless with surprise and pleasure. A gift was almost unknown to him, and the nice box made from his beloved oak was a treasure indeed. His thanks might be stammering, but John Deane could see how heartfelt they were. "It was Mary's thought," he said. "Five years ago, when I promised the little maid a box, she said *thee* ought to have it, so it ended in old Jacob making two. They are only just finished. I was intending to send it next time the timber waggon goes thy way."

"I think it would go on the top of the panniers," said Abie, eagerly. "I've got a tidy bit of cord with me, and Dobbin walks very steadily. I do want mother to see it. She will thank thee herself for thy kindness next Monthly Meeting, and Mary, too, for thinking of it."

So the box was safely tied above the panniers, and borne off in triumph to the lonely farm to hold the boy's few treasures.

But some years later the boxes came together again, when "M. D." became "M. P.," and

Abraham took home his play-fellow to fill the place of his mother, who had died the year before.

The marriages of Friends were still only half acknowledged as legal, so it was needful that the greatest possible publicity should be used, and the ancient certificate says that Abraham Prier and Mary Deane, "having publicly declared their intention of taking each other in marriage before several meetings of the people called Quakers, in Horsham, and in Ryegate, Capole, and Dorking, according to the good order used among them, whose proceedings therein, after a deliberate consideration thereof (with regard to the righteous law of God, and example of His people recorded in the Scriptures of truth,) were allowed by the said Meetings, they appearing clear of all others, and having also the consent of parents and relations concerned," were married in Reigate Meeting House on "the seventh day of the 10th month, called December, 1747."

The declaration of bridegroom and bride differs somewhat from the present form. "In the fear of God, and the presence of this assembly, whom I desire to be my witnesses," again hinting at the necessity of publicity for the sake of the five children afterwards born to them, whose names, John, William, Ann, Sarah, and Hannah, are written on the margin of the certificate.

Abraham, honest yeoman though he was, apparently never learned to write, for his name is signed with a cross, while "Mary Deane" is neatly written below.

Two oaken boxes, firm and good as ever, the old marriage certificate, and a single silver tablespoon of quaint shape, with "A. M. P." in plain Roman letters deeply cut on the handle—these are not much to conjure up a vision of the homely lives of the writer's great-great-grandparents but it has been a pleasant task, and it is with the hope that this sketch of early Quaker life in Sussex may interest other readers that I venture to send it forth into the world.

SALLIE OF THE BASKET SHOP

1756

"HAST thou really let Jim Burn have another lobster pot without payment? He had two last year, with many promises, and no money have we seen yet."

The voice was gentle, but there was a suggestion of reproach, as the speaker stopped the whirling spinning wheel, and looked up at her husband, who had just come in from the shop.

"Well, Elizabeth, the poor man begged so hard, and I thought of his sickly wife and hungry children."

"If Jim would hire himself for wages he would do better than patching up that leaky cobble of his for pottering shore fishing, and often not selling what he does catch."

"He says now there is a regular carrier's wain to Canterbury he shall sell lobsters well—the Church folk there like them. Let us hope that he will pay in time—ha, Tommy, my lad, what hast thou to show father?" And the good man changed the subject by picking up a sturdy two year old, with his pinafore full of cockle shells.

Elizabeth Elgar sighed—there were other hungry children beside Jim Burn's. She began quietly to cut thick slices of bread and butter at the table which was already spread for supper.

"The children will come in hungry from the shore," she said.

"Is it bread and scrape which they are to have to-night?" said the father, laughing.

"I had not the money for so much butter as usual, and thou knows, Thomas, I never take what I cannot pay for. I was obliged to spend more on beef to-day so that our good Jennie may have a plentiful wedding dinner to-morrow."

"Thou wilt miss Jennies adly, dear wife."

"Yes, but it may be better for our Sallie to have more duties—the child has such a spirit she needs plenty to do. School has done her little good of late. The puss found out that she knew as much as her teacher, and the Dame did not like her any the better for that."

"I wish we could afford to send her to Madam Carr's School."

"I do not. It is no place for a Friends' child—all genteel manners, and dancing, and filigree work. I only hope that it will not spoil little Mary Smith, who is as nice a child as I know, and a good playmate for Sallie."

"I wish that John had some of Sallie's energy. He tires of the confinement of the workshop, although he is getting very handy with the osiers—it makes him dull and surly, though he tries to do his duty, and had earned the holiday which I gave him to-day for a run on the shore with his sister. It is time they were coming in to supper." And the father, with Tommy still in his arms, passed through the shop and looked down the steep street of Folkestone towards the sea.

A very different Folkestone to the town we see to-day, for the date of our story was 1768. The harbour was small and ill protected, although numbers of mackerel boats, and trading hoys hailed from the port. The fishing population crowded in low cottages by the quay, many of them hung with strings of small, salted, flat fish, drying in the sun before being smoked, and called "Folkestone wall-fruit."

The streets were narrow, the shops low, and darkened by the overhanging upper storey. Thomas Elgar's shop was no exception, and was packed from floor to ceiling with lobster pots, bee skeps, and baskets, mostly of the strong, rough kind needed for the fisher's trade.

The shop opened into a large, sunny kitchen, the family living room, and behind was a good scullery and a large workshop of two floors, where

a couple of crippled old sailors helped Thomas and his boy to make their wares. Beyond, sloping up the steep hill-side was a good garden, full of vegetables, with a few bushes of cabbage rose and sweet briar, gay gilly flowers, and borders of sea pink, which were a special pleasure to Elizabeth in her busy life.

Into the kitchen bustled a stout serving maid with her hands full of pewter plates, in the freshest state of high polish, which she proceeded to arrange on the dresser.

"Thou art bent on leaving everything in the best order, Jennie," said her mistress, smiling.

"I can't abear to think of thee and Sallie doing all the work—and when I look at Tommy—bless his little heart!—I wonder how I ever came to promise to leave him, and all of ye."

"Thou hast been a true friend to us, Jennie, but thy Abel has waited long, and it is right thou shouldst go to a home of thy own, and if thou comes in on washing and baking days it will be a pleasure, as well as a help to us all."

"Well, mistress, nothing shall hinder that, and if the children should be ill——"

Here she was interrupted by a rush of noisy children from the shop. Sallie first—somehow her energetic nature always made her involuntarily the first—John, a sturdy boy of fourteen, with delicate Willie of five on his back, and

Mary Smith, a sea captain's daughter, and their favourite playfellow.

"Oh, mother, mother! We've had *such* a day."

"Sallie certainly is the luckiest girl."

"Johnnie carried me, and I am not a bit tired, mother."

"Never caught so many prawns and shrimps in our lives before, and they are all boiled, mother, ready for supper."

"But Mary has made her chintz gown, that her father brought her from the Indies, so very muddy—may she put on my First-day gown, mother? And Jennie, dear Jennie wilt thou wash and iron hers?"

"Yes, yes, Sallie—but now wash your hands and comb your hair, and come to supper, and then you shall tell us about it all."

Jennie promptly put an iron to heat by the embers, and took the gay chintz which Mary, a quiet brown eyed girl of eleven slipped off, and before the well trained children gathered to the supper table, it was nicely rinsed, and hung by the fire to dry.

"Now let us be thankful, and then tell us your story"; and every young head was bowed for the silent grace, even little Mary, the Church woman, being well accustomed to the practice.

Johnnie had emptied the contents of the girls' baskets on to two large platters, one of fine,

coral-pink prawns, the other of plump brown shrimps, a very welcome addition to the thinly buttered slices of home baked bread. The beverage was the smallest of small beer, for the dish of tea was a luxury only enjoyed on First days.

"How did you manage to get them boiled, Johnnie?"

"It was Sallie's doing, mother—she made the Excise man boil them for us."

"The Excise man!"

"Yes, mother, and he was such a nice man. He said he had a little maid of his own named Sallie, but she lives with her grannie at Chatham, and he hardly ever sees her."

"We went to the far cove, and the first pools had hardly any prawns, and I was for giving it up, and going on the Leas for blackberries, but Sallie went on—I suppose it is girls' luck, she always *does* find things—and she found some pools swarming with prawns and shrimps. We took turns with the net, and filled our baskets right up. As we came by the Exciseman's hut he came out. Mary and I hurried on, but Sallie goes up to him and says: 'Wouldst thou like some prawns for supper?' 'Why, whose kind little maid are you?' he said. 'I'm Thomas Elgar, the Quaker's little maid, and if thou wilt lend us a pot we will boil them for thee.' He

laughed, and brought out a fine big, three-legged pot, and we all collected drift wood, and he brought some embers from his fire, and a handful of salt, and we boiled the fish, and sorted them, and gave him a big plateful."

"And," added Sallie, "he said, 'I shall not forget the little maid who is not afraid of an Excise man.'"

"The town children won't go near him because they know he is on the watch to stop the men at the free-trade business, but thou hast not a smuggling father, Sallie," said the basket-maker, smiling.

"We had more prawns than we wanted, and I know thou dost not like to smell them boiling, mother, so I thought we would see if we could get it done on the shore, by borrowing a pot, and an Exciseman's is as good as any."

"And oh, father," said Johnnie, "there is a big schooner standing in with the tide, and old Jack Poole told me he thinks it may be *The Wings of the Morning.*"

"That is good news, Johnnie, for we are always glad when good Friend Nathan Sharpoy is safely home from his long voyages—and to have him with us at meeting to-morrow. If he is led to supplicate for thee and Abel, Jennie, you will have the prayer of a righteous man which availeth much."

Jennie, who had been seated modestly " below the salt," skinning shrimps for Tommy, who sat on her knee, looked somewhat alarmed. " My gracious me !—that me and Abel should have to speak out before the Captain ! " she said. " You need not mind that—a kinder heart than Captain Sharpoy does not sail the sea," and the master rose and left the house to see for himself the coming schooner. In a few minutes the chintz dress was nicely ironed by Jennie, and Mary, with her share of prawns in a little basket, went home to her mother who was much occupied in caring for her invalid mother-in-law, and was glad that her lonely child should be with Elizabeth Elgar's well-trained children, although Sallie's pranks were sometimes too bold and enterprising.

The little maiden bustled about helping clear the supper, and put the little brothers to bed, but to-night she had an unusual duty on her mind. Diving into the darkening wood-shed she found lurking there the young fisherman, Abel Godden, who to-morrow was to wed the faithful housemaid Jennie, who had lived in the family since she came, a forlorn orphan of twelve years old, as nursemaid to Johnnie.

Jennie and Abel were both Friends, attending diligently the almost silent meeting at Folkestone —devout worshippers in their simple way, though neither could read or write, so the marriage

ceremony was an alarming affair to them, and the bright Sallie had undertaken to coach them both.

She called Jennie for the final rehearsal.

"Now, Abel, stand up and take her hand—so—and speak up boldly, 'Friends, in the fear of the Lord and the presence of this assembly, who I desire to be my witnesses, I take my friend, Jane Stokes (mind that thou dost not say Jennie, Abel!) to be my wife, promising by Divine assistance to be unto her a loving and faithful husband, until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us.'"

Over and over the couple repeated the words until the little teacher was satisfied.

"That will do nicely—sit down—(and mind, don't drop her hand like a hot coal, Abel), and uncle Nichalls will read the certificate, and you will make your marks, and then the meeting for worship will go on;" and Sallie departed to bed, conscious of having helped her humble friends over a real difficulty.

All was bustle next morning behind the closed shop, Jennie being determined to leave every corner spotless. In order that the good mistress should act as mother at the wedding, her sister, Alys Nichalls, came to take care of Tommy, and prepare the festive dinner of roast beef and apple pies.

Jennie was arrayed in her new gown of stout drab grogram, chosen like the wedding dress of the wife of the Vicar of Wakefield, for its wearing quality, a snow-white apron and cap of her own spinning, and a little, flat straw hat, surrounded by a green ribbon, which, with a breast knot of the same, Abel had bought for her when his boat put in to a French port.

Abel came to walk with his bride and her master's family to meeting, the marriages of working class folk being permitted on First day.

Sure enough, there was the rugged, weather beaten face of Captain Sharpoy in the minister's gallery, hardly noticed by the bride and groom, so much flustered were they by having to face the meeting, but the solemn silence was bracing, and Sallie's pupils did her credit, for both spoke out clearly and well.

The little maiden on the side seat, with Willie in her charge, felt as if for her also a new life was beginning. She noticed that there were tears in her mother's eyes, for the loss of the faithful Jennie was a grave one to Elizabeth Elgar. The household work would be heavy with only the little daughter, at present with so much more zeal than discretion, as her helper, and Jennie had been invaluable in that tragic time three years before when " the fever " had swept through Folkestone. In the green yard outside

were three little graves, of boys who had come next in age to Sallie. Willie, too, had been at death's door, and the mother felt that but for Jennie's devotion, she must have lost him also. No wonder that both parents felt parting with so faithful a friend. The meeting, as was usual in those days, lasted for over two hours, broken only by the Captain's fervent prayer for the young couple, and a short sermon from old Joseph Elgar.

Cousin Joseph was one of Sallie's trials—his peculiar sing-song voice, and curious, mystical language, utterly beyond a child's comprehension, always irritated her. Volatile and restless as she generally was, she loved the quiet meeting, and had never found the art of sitting still so difficult as had John and Willie, and this sunny autumn morning she was solemnised by the evident emotion of her parents, for Sallie was a damsel of strong affections. The well conned words of the marriage declaration came to her with a new meaning—she felt that she should like to promise to be a loving and faithful daughter all her life—yet how often she had vexed that dear mother by her waywardness and quick temper—could she, with such faults, ever be the comfort she ought to be ? It could only be " by Divine assistance," and earnestly she prayed that she might never forget to look for that aid to do her duty.

After the meeting broke up, kindly greetings were freely bestowed on Abel and Jennie, but the good Captain, after his long absence at sea, was the chief attraction.

The same fever had left him a childless widower, with only two sour old sisters, who were not Friends, to keep his house, so that his most home-like place, in the intervals of his voyages, was at the Meeting House.

"We should esteem it a favour if thou wilt dine with us, Friend Nathan," said Thomas Elgar; so the wedding feast was graced by a highly honoured guest, which was well, as neither Abel nor Jennie were likely to help the conversation, both sitting as mute as the children, who had been taught to be seen and not heard when guests were present. The Captain spoke much of his past voyage. He had brought a full cargo of rice from Georgia, had been unusually favoured with fair winds, and was anchoring at Folkestone to unload a small portion of his cargo, before going on to London.

Meanwhile Johnnie listened with an eagerness which did not escape notice. The boy loved the sea, and the father hardly knew how incessantly the two old sailors, both crippled by accidents on board ship, told tales of ocean life to the boy, as they sat together twisting osiers in the workshop. Perhaps they felt that their quiet

master was a bit of a landlubber, and wished to infuse a little more spirit of adventure into master Johnnie.

"*The Wings of the Morning* is likely to be in port some time," said her Captain, "she needs a thorough scraping, for the barnacles were worse than usual this voyage, and we can't put to sea again without a new suit of sails, and other gear. We begin the unloading to-morrow. Didst thou ever go over a schooner, my lad?" he said, turning to John. The shy boy turned scarlet. "No, nothing bigger than a hoy," he stammered. "Then come down to the wharf at eight to-morrow, if thy father can spare thee, and I will show thee the ship, and some of my foreign curiosities," said the Captain, kindly. "And bring a peck bag, Johnnie, and thou shalt have some rice for thy mother." This kind offer of a welcome store to the frugal house-wife was not to be refused, and the boy's pleasure was great when his father gave ready consent.

Dinner over, the guest departed, soon followed by Abel and Jennie, to take possession of the humble cottage near the sea which they had furnished with their joint savings. The father took the three boys out with him, rather wistfully watched by Sallie, as she soberly tied a big apron over her First-day frock, and helped her mother with the needful housework.

During the first week the little new broom swept very clean indeed. Sallie was not only active, but had a large share of that excellent quality called " gumption," and the good mother rejoiced in her apt pupil. Sallie felt she was getting on finely, but at twelve years old such extreme virtue is likely to suffer relapse, and the day came when she felt she was in bondage indeed. Every year, after the flail of the thresher had beaten out the earliest of the freshly reaped wheat, Thomas Elgar was in the habit of hiring a cart to drive to a pleasant farm for a supply of straw, of which to make his store of bee skeps, and also searching a wide common near by for a particular kind of bramble, the long tough sprays of which were split into thin strips to bind the straw together. Sallie had often been his companion and gloried in making herself useful on this special excursion. What were her feelings when she found that she could not be spared and that little Willie was to go instead—Willie, who was afraid of a cow, and did not know a bramble from an elm tree!

" Oh! mother, can't I really go? "

" No, Sallie, I cannot spare thee. There is the ironing; and Tommy and the shop to mind."

" Johnnie could do that."

" John has to walk to Cheriton with a bushel basket, which is specially needed."

Poor Sallie!—she burst into a storm of tears and protests, even stamping in the vehemence of her feeling that she was an injured individual.

"Sarah, I am astonished at thy conduct! Thou grieves me sorely by such a display of evil temper. Be silent at once! Take this basket and bring me three cabbages from the top of the garden."

The habit of obedience prevailed. The poor child stumbled off, blinded with tears, but as her mother expected, the quiet and fresh air, the sight of the calm blue sea, and the unseen power which was already at work in the young heart, soon conquered, and it was a very contrite and humble maiden who came back with the cabbages.

"I am truly sorry, mother, do forgive me, and I will try and be cheerful at home, and not jealous of Willie."

"That is like my brave little daughter. I am sorry for thy disappointment, but the home duties must be done, and it is good to bear the yoke in thy youth."

Sallie exerted herself, and worked so well that when Mary came in to see if her playmate were at liberty, the good mother said kindly, "I can watch the shop now, as I sit at my wheel—thou canst take Tommy in the little waggon to meet John. There are plenty of blackberries on the

Cheriton road, so pick enough for a pudding to-morrow."

The waggon was a primitive basket on four solid wooden wheels, but Tommy was happily content to be jumbled over the rough road by the two girls.

On some high ground they soon spied Johnnie leaning on a gate, and gazing out to sea so earnestly that he did not notice their approach until they were close at hand.

"Were you dreaming, Johnnie?"

"Ay, Mary, I suppose I was—dreaming of what it would be like to be Captain of a fine ship like thy father is."

"Do you want to be a sailor, Johnnie? Oh! I hope you will—it's so much nicer than baskets."

"How would father do without thee, Johnnie?" said Sally the dutiful.

"Any lad could carry home baskets as I have been doing to-day—and when I look at the sea and smell the fresh wind I fairly hate the stuffy workshop."

"Hast thou told father so?"

"I did say something of wishing I could see the world, like Captain Sharpoy, but he said a sailor's is a rough life, and I had better be content with the baskets."

"Mother said this morning, 'it is good to bear the yoke in our youth.'"

"Not if the yoke don't fit. I know I should make a better mariner than tradesman. Besides father says trade is so bad, and I should be earning my living at once, with a better prospect than i I stick to the shop."

Sallie considered. "I would talk it over with mother," she said; and all the children turned to the delights of blackberrying.

That very evening John had his opportunity, while Sallie was putting the little brother to bed, and spoke in a sensible, manly way of his wish to go to sea. Elizabeth Elgar heard with a pang —what mother does not when her first-born turns to a dangerous calling? But she knew that the prospect if he remained at home was but of a meagre livelihood, and realised that a boy does best if allowed to follow his natural bent.

"But there is one difficulty thou hast not thought of, Johnnie. To apprentice thee on a good ship there would be a fee of a good many guineas, and I know not where we could look for that. Until the fever we always had some savings put by, but the illness of thy dear little brothers, the physician from Dover, who charged so heavily and did so little good; the costly medicines, and the three funerals were but barely paid for by what we had in hand, and we have never been able to replace it."

"Could not I go as a cabin boy, mother? They cannot pay fees."

"No, Johnnie, but they are not taught the mariner's calling, and cannot look to be more than a man before the mast. Thy father and I would wish, with the schooling that we have given thee, that thou mightest rise to be master of a ship in time. However, we will talk it over, and be sure, my boy, if it is thy appointed lot, way will open for thee."

At first the basket-maker blew cold on Johnnie's wishes. His was a quiet and rather dreamy nature, and the "wanderlust" had never troubled him—the mother could understand it better.

"If he could sail under Captain Nathan in *The Wings of the Morning* I should be content," he said; "but to let a boy of his training knock about with lewd sailor-men on an ordinary craft is what I never will consent to, and, as thou says, the question of the 'prentice fee makes it impossible at present."

But the very fact that the chosen ship might be several weeks in port made the mother more anxious to settle matters.

One afternoon, when her husband was in the shop, and Jennie had called to take the little ones for a walk, she took Sallie up to her bedroom, saying: "I have something to show thee, my daughter, which thou hast never seen."

Taking a key from a drawer she mounted on the solid, oaken bedstead, and to Sallie's astonishment a carved panel opened, disclosing a small cupboard.

Elizabeth took out a leather bag, and seating herself on the broad window-seat, she drew forth and displayed to the child's bewildered eyes a handsome, fluted cup of solid silver with two graceful handles. It was such a contrast to the rigid simplicity of the household furnishing that Sallie was much impressed.

"Oh! mother, how beautiful! Is it really thine?"

"Yes, Sallie, it came to me from my dear mother."

"But why has it two handles?"

"It is what is called a loving-cup, and is passed from one to another when healths are drunk among the world's people—a heathenish custom, which Friends do not join in. I have heard that the Lord Mayor of London has such cups of solid gold to pass round at his banquets."

"There are letters on it, mother. 'A.G.' marked with little pricks, like we prick things on paper—and here at the bottom are more letters, 'E.N.'—that used to be thy name—and—why, here is 'S.E.'—that would stand for Sallie Elgar, but it could not have meant me."

"It does mean thee, Sallie, and it is because

thou hast a share in it that I am going to consult thee, but I must tell thee how such a thing came into a Friend's family. The cup is a very old one—quite eighty years, for it was a christening present to the Lady Alys Glynn, and she was born in the year that her father helped to bring the Protestant King William to England. She was married when almost a child to Squire Kelsey, and came to live near Dover, and an ill life he led her, for he was drunk almost every night. My mother was her maid, and being a stout young woman with a will of her own, and her lady a gentle, timid creature, she often had to stand between and protect her from his roughness. Lady Alys was one who was convinced of the truth when some eminent publick Friends visited Kent, and my dear mother attended her lady to the meetings till she also received the blessed light, and became a greater comfort than ever to her mistress, who had much persecution to suffer from her husband, especially after her two sons, Robert and David, both threw in their lot with the Friends of Truth. The squire was injured in a drunken brawl, and had no power to recover as a clean-living man would. Mother helped Lady Alys to nurse him to the end, and hoped for better days for her dear mistress, but she was soon struck down with the palsy, and after lying helpless for some months, she passed away in peace.

The squire had wasted his substance, and the sons sold all to pay his debts, with just enough left to take them both to Pennsylvania to begin life afresh. Their mother's cup they insisted on giving to my grandmother as a mark of their gratitude. 'We shall have no need of such gauds in a new colony,' they said, 'and thou, Sarah, may find some day it is of use to thee and thine'—mother was just marrying my dear father then. I was her first-born, and she determined that I should have the cup, and put my letters on it, although it was thy aunt Alys who was named after her lady. When thou, her first little grand-daughter wast born, and named for her, she added thy letters to give thee a part in it, but before thou wast two years old, she died. And now, Sally, canst thou guess why I show it to thee just now?"

Sallie's quick wit was seldom at fault.

"Dost thou want to sell it to pay Johnnie's 'prentice fee, mother?"

"Yes, Sallie, the cup is of no use lying in the secret cupboard, and it may make all the difference in John's life if he can start under a godly captain in *The Wings of the Morning*—for to sea he will go, I feel sure of that. Art thou willing to give up thy share of it, if father can sell it to the Dover silversmith when he goes to Monthly Meeting next week?"

Sallie sat and considered. She did so love pretty things, and the beauty of the cup, contrasted with the drab plainness of her surroundings appealed to her strongly. Would it be selfish to say no? Was there not some other way?

"Mother," she said, "dost thou not think that Friend Nathan would take the cup for the fee, and let us buy it back in time? Johnnie would soon be getting wages, and I can earn something, I know, and the basket trade may be better."

Elizabeth was surprised, and said thoughtfully, "He might, but I do not think thy father would like to ask him, nor should I."

"But I might, mother! The captain is kind, and he would not be offended at a little maid —oh, do let me. He came back from London in Friend Marsh's hoy yesterday, and will be at home, May not I go before I get too frightened?"

"We will ask thy father, Sallie," and Elizabeth went down to the shop with the leather bag in her hand. Consent was readily given. Thomas had not relished the idea of haggling over the price of his wife's heirloom with the silversmith, and was pleased at the plan.

"Put on a clean cap and apron, Sallie, and make thyself quite neat, while I polish the cup, and put it in a covered basket for thee."

Away tripped the eager child, down one steep street, and up another to Captain Sharpoy's house. The door was opened by his sister Grizel, who scowled at the little messenger. "You can't see the Captain, he is up in the summer house at the top of the garden. Betsy is out, I am not going to fetch him down to a child."

"Father and mother sent me on some very particular business—please may I go up the garden to him? I can find the way."

Ungraciously the woman led her through the house, and up the steep path she sped to the corner where the Captain had built a look out, with a magnificent view, where he now sat, enjoying a well earned rest. Thomas Elgar was one of his most valued friends, and he greeted the breathless little maid kindly.

"Please, Friend Sharpoy, Johnnie wants to go to sea. Dost thou want another 'prentice on *The Wings of the Morning*?"

"Oh, ho—that's the way the wind blows! I thought as much when I dined at your house. He is a bright boy, but I could show him no favour on my ship. He would have to share all the hard work, and mind what is said to him —sharp!"

"Johnnie always is a good boy—that is, he means to be, and if he wasn't, mother always said it was I led him into mischief," said Sallie,

penitently. "But he does so want to go to sea on thy ship—if—thou would only take this for his 'prentice fee," and she set the silver cup on the little table before him.

"Why, how came you by this fine thing?"

Sallie repeated her mother's story. "We don't want to sell grandmother's cup, but if thou wilt keep it, and let us buy it back when we have saved the money we shall be so glad."

The Captain's eyes twinkled. "Thou art a business-like little puss," he said; "but there are many things to consider in this matter. I will come down this evening, and see thy parents, and the lad himself."

"And thou wilt keep the cup."

"Yes, I will lock it in my strong chest, and if we do not come to terms, you can fetch it back."

As they walked down the steep garden he filled her basket with choice pears and plums, and sent her home triumphant. To Johnnie's joy the interview was favourable. His indentures were made out, and he sailed away into the unknown seas, determined that every penny he could save should go to redeem his mother's silver cup.

Meanwhile Sallie was becoming more and more valuable at home. Trade was looking up, and a little maid of all work released her to become her father's right hand in the shop. He noted with

pleasure her increasing thoughtfulness, and how solemn and tender was her face during their often silent meetings. Quakerism was at a low ebb in Kent at that date. In the cover of the large Bible which gives the names of Thomas Elgar's eight children is an entry in faded ink: "1773, Eliz Elgar met with five Friends to answer the Queries, but told them we could not answer them."

It was probably the clause on "defrauding the public revenue" which the good women could not face, for complicity with smuggling was only too frequent, and few tradesmen would refuse an order as Thomas did when a man wished him to make a dozen extra strong wicker panniers, nominally to bring up sea-weed from the shore, but, he well knew, really designed to carry inland the spirits, silks, and tobacco landed by night on that lawless coast.

As business improved he would often give Sallie the treat of taking her on horseback—at first on a pillion, but afterwards on a lighter horse by herself, to meetings at a distance, as she says in her diary in mentioning these rides, "I had a great love for Friends."

This love she imparted to Mary Smith, and the girl, impressed by the strength and sweetness of her friend's character, became a member of the Society, and laid aside the gay chintz and ribbons, for the garb of the plain Friend, as she

is depicted in a water-colour portrait as the honoured wife of John, the sea-captain.

When Sallie was sixteen, a great sorrow befell her. The good father died after a short illness. Many duties devolved on her, under the weight of which she would have felt crushed, "had I not been obliged to have resource to the Lord for additional supplies of strength," she wrote in her little brown leather pocket book.

Bravely the mother and daughter kept up the business, supporting themselves and the two younger boys in independence.

But a new interest was coming into Sallie's life. Hitherto, in the dearth of outward ministry, she had drawn her spiritual help from the Head of the Church alone, but on "25–12–1774"—(she makes no mention of its being Christmas day!) she writes in her journal. "We were favoured by two Friends, John Kendal and Joseph Ransom. They had to treat much of God's gracious dealings with them in their youth that seemed to touch my heart that before to my remembrance, had never known a tendering time by what came through man."

From that time forth the many visits of ministering Friends were eagerly looked for. Sallie often accompanied them to distant meetings, and when at the age of thirty a gift in the ministry was laid upon her, she soon began

to travel herself to the comfort and edification of Friends all over England.

After her mother's death, when her brothers were all launched in the world, she married William Charman, of Reigate, and her dearly loved stepdaughter, Ann Charman, became the wife of Thomas Elgar, the eldest of John and Mary's many sons. She died in 1836, and Priscilla Hack, of Brighton, and other Friends have told me how warmly their parents used to speak of " Dear Sallie Charman," in even her old age.

Her diaries, her mother's Bible, and her silver cup keep up the memory of one who undoubtedly served her generation well before she fell asleep so many years ago.

HER FIRST YEARLY MEETING

1810

"Is that all thou needs to-day?" The customer glanced at the large pile of goods with an amused smile.

"Quite, I thank thee, William Charman, and enough, sure*ly*," and the strong accent on the last syllable proclaimed the speaker to be of Sussex birth and breeding.

"Well, well, when young women are going to get married, drapers expect orders, and thou art one who knows her own mind about thy things, which is more than I can say for some of my customers."

The bill was paid, and then the girl said, "We will call for the parcel as we drive home. But, please, is Sarah Charman within? I should like to speak to her."

"Oh, yes, she will be pleased to see thee, Sarah. I often say my Sallie is more in demand than my shop goods," and the visitor was soon being kindly greeted by a comely, middle-aged Friend in the parlour behind the shop.

"I have a favour to ask of thee, Sarah Charman," said Sarah Pennifold, a bonny country

girl on whose thick yellow hair the Friends' bonnet sat with a somewhat unaccustomed air, for she had but recently joined the Society, and the " plain language " came also with a deliberate effort. " Art not thou going to London Yearly Meeting next week ? "

" Yes, although I am not representative as I was last year. My dear daughter Ann and I look to have this last one together, for when she is married, and settled at Arundel, it may not be easy for her to attend."

" Then may I ask, if it is not too much trouble, if thou wilt choose a tea set for me ? "

" Thou wants one for thy future home ? " said her hostess, kindly. " But why not choose it thyself ? "

" I have looked at all those here, and in the Horsham shops, and they are not nice enough—all painted with gaudy flowers, not a bit like the real flowers either—except one, which was priced five guineas, which is more than I can afford. Father has given me money for my wedding clothes, but the tea set is to be bought with my own savings—money I have earned with my chickens and bees, and it comes to just two guineas. There is a fine corner cupboard with glass doors in the best parlour at Hunts Green, so I do want a nice set, and I thought thou would know what is suitable for a Friends' house, and

would be so kind as to choose one in London, and have it sent down by the carrier."

"Certainly I will, if thou canst trust my taste. I am intending to buy one for Ann. Her father has always jested at our love for our dish of tea—although he was always quite ready to share it—and said my gift on her marriage must be a nice tea set, so we can choose thine at the same time."

"Oh, thank thee! I must go now, for I have more errands in the town. Here are the two guineas, if thou wilt take charge of it."

"Bring thy father in for a cup of tea before your drive home. We shall be pleased to see you both."

The girl departed, and Sarah Charman returned to her homely task of mending the youngest apprentice's ragged elbows, for all the young men in her husband's shop shared her motherly care, but her thoughts were busy with a kindly plan for Sarah Pennifold's benefit.

The door opened, and a very different girl came in, pale and slender, with deep-set eyes of dark, purple-grey, and a shy, reserved manner.

"See, mother," she said, "I have found the right flower to complete my group. I have some yellow and purple silks that will just do," and she displayed some small pansies in a wine-glass.

"Where didst thou find them?"

"In the Fengates garden. Father sent me over to the farm with a message, so I have had a fine walk through the fields and over the common."

She took up an embroidery frame, in which a group of silken flowers was exquisitely worked; rose, larkspur, passion-flower, auricula and geranium, and the pansies were to fill in the last corner.

"Ann," said Sarah Charman, "I believe thou canst do a great kindness if thou art only willing."

The girl looked up, startled. Her nature had a touch of the recluse in its shyness, and her excellent stepmother's large-hearted plans did not always appeal to her.

"What if we take Sarah Pennifold to Yearly Meeting with us? If she shared the back seat of the chaise and the bedroom with thee it would not cost much, and I feel it would be of untold benefit to her."

"Oh, mother, must we? She is such a bouncing girl—and—thou knows that gossipping Jane Humphreys is always saying what a train of young men run after her."

"That is no fault of hers, for even Jane Humphreys never accused her of encouraging one of them but John Robinson, who is one of the worthiest young men in our Society. When he drove me to Hampshire the last time I was travelling in the ministry, I was much struck

with his solid behaviour, as well as his kind care for my comfort. As to thy other objection, I really think Sarah's bouncing days are over. Active and energetic she will always be, but Mary Mills and I found, when we visited her on her application for membership, that she is of a truly tender spirit, and no stranger to Divine visitations. Thou knows her mother is not a Friend, and she has not had the guarded education which thou hast been favoured with. I believe thou couldst be very helpful to her. When she is once married and settled at Hunts Green with John's aged father to care for, she will not be able to leave home, but the memory of such a journey as this would never leave her."

Ann was silent, and went on diligently outlining her spray of pansies. At last she said, "Dost thou really think that ten days would make much difference?"

"Indeed, I do. Sarah feels keenly her lack of education. I have noticed in little things she is ready to learn, and to follow all that is improving. She would be noting what is best in all the dear, superior Friends we shall be with. I know myself what it is to long for a chance of higher things. But remember, my dear one, I do not want to press anything on thee for which thou hast no concern. It is thy last maiden Yearly Meeting, and I want thee to enjoy it."

"Oh, mother, my stupid shyness makes me selfish; Thomas says I must try to overcome it. Shall I slip into the shop, and if father is at liberty, ask him what he thinks of this plan before Sarah returns?" and putting down her embroidery, she left the room.

Her stepmother's eyes followed her lovingly. "Dear child, that shyness brings her many a cross. I do not think Thomas would ever have won her if he had not been actually in the house for years. But I believe she will soon learn to appreciate Sarah's fine character when she knows her better."

The father was pleased with the plan. John Pennifold had been a playmate of his own, but for many years had lived in the forest region of Sussex, and his elder children grew up in the Church of England, but when they moved to near Ifield Meeting, this youngest daughter had attended it with her father, and found there her spiritual home.

When they came in together the father was almost as pleased as the excited girl. "To go to London!" To see Friends at their headquarters; to choose her own tea set; to be with Ann, for whose gentle refinement she cherished a respectful admiration—all was delightful, and her thanks were fervent.

"Thou must come to us overnight, Sarah,"

said William Charman. "My Sallie will be wanted at the Minister's meeting at ten o'clock, so we must leave here at seven. I have a spanking great chestnut for chaise horse just now, but with four such weighty Friends and their baggage we must give him time."

This was an added delight. The intervening days were spent by Sarah in getting her very modest wardrobe into nicest order, and on a bright May evening her future husband, John Robinson, drove her to Reigate, ready for the early start.

Her extreme pleasure was infectious, and Ann began to feel more warmly towards her. She showed her the newly finished embroidery, and the love of flowers was a taste in common. The two brides each spoke hopefully of flower gardens of the future—Sarah at the Surrey farmhouse, Ann behind a draper's shop at Arundel.

"And this is thy work too?" said Sarah, rising to look at an oval frame in which a wreath of tiny flowers surrounded a map of England; a marvellous work of art to her untutored eyes, in spite of the lumpy shapelessness of the forty counties.

"Yes, I worked that at school, and here is a sampler I made at seven years old. Cousin Martha, who cared for me when my own mother died, kept me closely to it. I liked the flowers, and those droll little stags, but oh, I did hate the

letters. She thought a woman was born solely to use the needle, and was quite vexed with father when he took me out to pick up chestnuts in the park. It was a happy day for me when dear Mother Sallie came home. She understood that a girl needs exercise and fresh air, as well as to learn sewing."

"But thou sews beautifully. When I was seven years old I was climbing trees with my brothers in the Forest. I can do plain sewing, and have made myself a patchwork quilt, but nothing like these."

"But thou canst spin, and that I have never learnt."

"Oh, yes, and last winter John brought me a quantity of fine flax, which he had grown in the Flaxfield at Hunts Green, and soaked and hackled it himself; I span it; and father, who had not touched his loom for years, has woven it into beautiful table-cloths and sheets for me. House linen with so much home love put into it ought to wear well."

"How nice to have home-made things. But my father, being a draper, has bought me a plentiful supply at wholesale prices."

"And thou art to be married at Reigate Meeting in August—eighth month, I mean?"

"Oh, no! It is to be at Dorking. I could not face it here, with all the townspeople looking

on. Governess used to say she could not see how a female of sensibility could endure a public wedding," and Ann looked a little lackadaisical.

"Ho! *I* don't mind! I am so proud of my John, and of being his chosen, that I could face any audience when taking him for my husband! But few people will come to Ifield Meeting to see a bride in a plain dimity gown, and it will not be for some months yet."

In the early freshness of the next morning the chaise came to the door, and in it was stowed the hamper with provisions for the week which country folk were accustomed to take to London. A large ham, butter and eggs from William Charman's own farm, and, like Mrs. John Gilpin, his careful wife resolved to be furnished with her own wine, but as she packed the bottles in the hamper it was *not* left behind!

There, too, was the round tin case, made on purpose to hold two Friends' bonnets, and Ann's neat little trunk covered with horse-skin of a bright bay colour, with rows of brass nails, and a brass plate with "A.C."; quite a gorgeous article in Sarah's eyes, whose own luggage was a large bandbox tied up in a blue checked kerchief.

The girls climbed to the back seat, William Charman took the reins, and away went the strong chestnut horse, clattering through the empty streets of Reigate, and up the long hill

of the North Downs just behind the town. Over commons, green with spring grass, through beech woods carpeted with bluebells, to Croydon, where Ann had visited a schoolfellow, and pointed out the wooded height of Crohamhurst as the place where they had picked wild lilies of the valley in abundance.

Croydon was a larger town than Sarah had ever seen before, and she looked about with eager interest as they drove through. Then came more commons, the country village of Streatham, and, after a while, the outskirts of the great city.

Through the Borough, with an alarming amount of traffic to country eyes, but their driver was well accustomed to London, and steered skilfully through it. At last he turned round smiling. "Now, Sarah, we are going over London Bridge, and we shall meet a white horse."

"How *canst* thou know that?"

"Oh, it is an old saying that no one ever crosses this bridge without meeting one, and certainly I never have—ah, there it is!" as the very first hackney coach they met was drawn by a dilapidated white steed.

The first glimpse of the broad Thames thrilled the girl, who had never seen a river, or a vessel of any kind before; and they drove on, past the Monument, through narrow, busy streets, until they reached Bishopsgate, and drew up at the

corner of Houndsditch, from which was the chief entrance of Devonshire House in those days.

Here Sarah Charman alighted, to go straight to the Ministers' Meeting. The others drove on to Devonshire Square, where they always lodged, and here the girls and the luggage were dropped, and William Charman took his horse to the stables near, waiting to see it fed (as was his invariable custom when away from home) and then returned.

"Now, Ann, this is Sarah's first visit to London, and we must show her all we can. I am quite at liberty to-day. Where shall we take her?"

"The Tower, and the lions first, father." So they started forth, the kind old man treating the girls, hungry with their drive, to a "nooning" of wonderful London cakes and tarts at a pastry-cook's. Ignorant as Sarah was of history, her bright mind eagerly took in all she could learn about the Tower, and was entranced at the sight of the live lions then kept there.

The Docks, with the great ships full of merchandise from distant lands were fascinating, and as they walked back to the lodging for dinner, in Bishopsgate they came on a china shop, and through the small lattice panes of the window were to be seen tea sets in marvellous abundance and variety.

"We must not choose without Mother," said Ann; but to find mother at leisure for shopping was not easy.

They shared the lodging with Priscilla Hannah Gurney from Coalbrookdale, with whom Sarah Charman had once joined in an adventurous journey in the ministry, visiting Friends in wild Wales, and they had naturally much to say to each other. To the girls this Friend was rather alarming. After a gay girlhood she had returned to the faith of her fathers, and to the most extreme self-abnegation, wearing the flat beaver hat over a black hood, and long green apron, which for some unaccountable reason was considered the outward sign of perfect orthodoxy.

Her very precise speech and manner made Sarah feel like a country bumpkin, and shrink into a corner, as shy as Ann. But from that corner she heard and saw much. Elizabeth Joseph Fry, as she was called, came in to visit her cousin, fair and stately, and already a Minister, although not thirty years of age; with all the charm of Earlham manners, and a pleasant word for the bashful girls. When she afterwards became famous Sarah was glad to remember that early interview in the London lodging.

They went early to Devonshire House on the opening day of Yearly Meeting, and Sarah felt in a new world as she stood in the yard in that

gentle buzz of kindly talk that we know so well, but in 1810 the appearance was different, as all who attended were in something like a uniform of browns, and greys, and drabs.

Was it real simplicity? Sarah wondered, as girls flitted past in delicate pearl grey silk dresses and bonnets, with silk stockings and morocco slippers. Ann, who had been educated at the best Friends' School near London, was soon surrounded by schoolmates. Sarah Charman was well known as a Minister all over England, and had endless warm greetings; while Sarah Pennifold stood, with her back to the wall, wishing that she could see just one face that she knew in all the crowd.

But a small consolation came to her as she noted that there were quite a large number of obviously country folk among them—men, old and young, sun-tanned and horny-handed, who certainly were farmers; and women in really simple array, whose hands showed acquaintance with homely work, where not covered by the drab mittens.

Presently one of these elderly farmers approached her with extended hand. "I think this is a young Friend at her first Yearly Meeting," he said kindly.

"Yes, thank thee, I never was in London before."

"And thou comes from the country I can see,—

so do I, and I can tell thee, young woman, it is a great thing for us, who meet few Friends, to have this privilege. Thou wilt learn much in the meetings, and soon get acquainted with other young folk. Farewell," and he turned away just as Ann came up, a little conscience-stricken at having left her visitor alone so long.

"Why, Sarah, didst thou know Jonathan Hutchinson?"

"Oh, no; but he saw I was a stranger, and spoke so kindly."

"He is a much beloved Minister. I hope thou wilt hear him preach, but it is time to go in now," and she led the way to the Women's Meeting House, where her mother was already seated among other eminent Friends in the Ministers' gallery, including Mary Pryor, who had had marvellous experiences during her extensive travels by land and sea; Anna Price, from Wales; gentle, cultured Mary Capper, who always had the right, loving word for the younger women, and remarked with satisfaction that there were many more young folk than usual attending that year.

Ann led Sarah to a raised side seat, and they watched the women Friends filling up the large area with row after row of quiet-coloured shawls, and the rather disguising Friend's bonnet. The speaking in that day was invariably from the

upper benches—a voice upraised from the back would have been startling. Two stately women, Hannah Fisher and Ann Lucas, were called to the table and took their places, first laying aside their tunnel-like bonnets, which would certainly have impeded the seeing and hearing necessary for Clerks, and revealing stiff, fresh muslin caps.

There was far less of business, and more of exhortation than we are accustomed to, and the first sitting was made memorable by a visit from two men Friends; after having ascertained by an exchange of notes conveyed by door-keepers from desk to desk, that it was "a suitable time to receive a Friend under concern."

After the affirmative message was sent, the dignified Clerk announced, "The Friend is Benjamin White, from America."

To Sarah this was wonderful news. She had never seen an American, and here was a Friend who had come thousands of miles with his Gospel message—he must be a prophet indeed! She was not disappointed; it was a fine, silver-haired man who came in, accompanied by an English minister, Joseph Gurney Bevan. They walked to the centre of the gallery, where the women had moved to leave seats, and after sitting in profound silence for some time, the American rose, and spoke long and earnestly to mothers on the care and teaching of the children entrusted

to them, and the solemn responsibilities of motherhood. The seed fell on no unreceptive ground, probably in years to come Ann's five children and Sarah's ten benefited by the advice given in the first sitting of Sarah's first Yearly Meeting.

As they went to dinner, Sarah Charman noted with satisfaction the genuine interest and eager questions of her young guest, and felt more than satisfied that they had done right in bringing her to London.

The interest deepened as days went on. Nothing came amiss to Sarah. The long Testimonies (although some Friends in fear of exalting the creature would allude to them as "paper tombstones,") were full of human interest, especially one to Deborah Darby, although it was only beginning to be realised what an asset to the Society her faithful ministry had brought, in the convincement of the young French nobleman, Stephen Grellet.

From the men's meeting came a report of "Sufferings" for conscience' sake of a few young men then in prison for refusing to serve in the Militia, although their sentences were but for a month, and under no stringent rules.

Also of Friends' horses and waggons being commandeered to carry baggage, and Sarah thrilled with pride when she heard that "to

punish a young Friend in Surrey for protesting against such a use of his property, the military captain, although he had sufficient waggons to carry all his baggage, laid a single musket in that of John Robinson, and compelled his carter to take it all the way to Lewes."

From the Men's Meeting also came the report of Ackworth School, and of the new one at Sidcot, which had been established for the children of Western Friends two years before; and also a concern of Richard Cockin, that when Ministers were to be recorded, it should be done in conference of men and women Friends instead of, as in the past, by the Men's Meeting only.

This innovation must have been accepted at once, for the following year Elizabeth Fry speaks of having been present at such a conference when her sister, Priscilla Gurney, was recorded a Minister.

The great Meeting for Worship gave the only opportunity to hear men as well as women. Sarah's kindly acquaintance, the Lincolnshire farmer, Jonathan Hutchinson, spoke most impressively, and also the handsome, dark-eyed Henry Tuke, from York, and the apostolic Thomas Shillitoe. Taking notes was not then invented, but the country girl had a marvellous memory, and those sermons were stored away to be often pondered over in future days.

At last came the day when Sarah Charman was at liberty to go to the wonderful china shop, at which the girls had peeped many times as they walked along Bishopsgate between meetings.

"We will look for Sarah's first," she said, and asked the shopman for a neat set about two guineas.

"I should recommend the Newhall china, Madam, very neat and chaste," he said, having sounded the taste of Quaker customers before, and a set was displayed with which Sarah was charmed. The oval teapot, with its pretty stand, a covered sugar basin of the same shape, but small as befitted sugar at fourteenpence the pound; cream jug, cups and saucers, and cake dish; but, oddly enough, no plates. It was of delicate, white, gilt-edged china; on each piece was a rather faint grey landscape, and in the foreground a shepherd driving a flock of sheep. What could be more appropriate for a farmhouse? It was paid for, and ordered to be carefully packed and sent by a carrier who every week made the journey from Crawley to London.

Then came Ann's turn. Cost was not so needful to consider here, and mother and daughter agree in choosing one of the best of the Newhall sets, with high, pagoda-like lids, and a different landscape in black and white delicately painted on each piece, which included a dozen coffee mugs. How charming the girls thought it!

"It is worth while getting nice ones," said Sarah Charman, "for the best tea set should never be left to servants, and if you wash them with your own careful hands, there is no reason why they should not go down to your grand-children."

"And they are so alike," said Sarah, merrily, "that when there is a wedding, or other great occasion, our grandchildren can lend them to each other, if they live near enough."

"Perhaps our grandchildren will be the same people, and both sets stand in one glass cupboard," —which was a wonderful speech for shy Ann, but the genial companionship of the downright Sarah had thawed her reserve to a surprising extent.

Pleasant days must end, and on the first of June the strong chestnut horse took the party safely back to take up the workaday life of the country again, but for Sarah life was always the richer for this kind plan of her good friends the Charmans.

Both girls were married within a few months, and Ann Elgar attended Yearly Meeting as representative in the year 1817, leaving two little children in her Reigate home.

It was many years before Sarah was again able to visit London, but through all those busy years there were pleasant memories, and constant happy references in her talk with her good husband to the grand event of her first Yearly Meeting.

DRAWN FOR THE MILITIA

1814

"DANIEL, what art thou about?" The master's voice was sharp and worried, as he called from a small counting-house at the back of a draper's shop—the largest in the market town of Chelmsford.

"Just putting up the shutters, Friend Boyce," came a cheery answer.

"That is the 'prentice's duty."

"Yes, but thou sent Thomas with that heavy roll of linen to Tailor Jenks, and our friend Jimmy here is not quite man enough yet to manage it alone. There, Jimmy, that is the last—now the iron bar, and we shall have done."

"He has a kind heart, has Daniel," mused the older man, "and ill news can wait. I may as well let him have his supper in peace for this Militia business will trouble him sorely."

A few minutes later the whole family gathered round a table in the back parlour, presided over by the strict, but kindly mistress, Deborah Boyce, in the high-crowned Friends' cap and kerchief of the year 1814. She was an excellent house-

keeper, her good plain fare was muchappreciated not only by little curly haired Jimmy, and sixteen year old Thomas, but by Daniel Pryor Hack, who had lately been promoted to be shopman, and was indeed, with his trustworthy diligence, his employer's right hand—more so than Mark Gainsford, who was older but of less dependable character.

The meal ended, Joel Boyce drew from his pocket a paper. "Look here, Daniel and Mark, this was left here this afternoon by one of the lackeys of the Lord Lieutenant of the county. I thought this Militia trouble was over, now Bonaparte is safely shut up in the island of Elba. There is now no excuse of the fear of invasion, but there are minds that think a man is made for the express purpose of killing, or being killed, and our new Essex Lord Lieutenant seems that sort. He has resolved to revive the troop of county militia, and each householder has to furnish the names of every man in his house between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, so both of you are included, unfortunately. I only escape by one year myself."

The young men looked grave and startled. "Is it the law that *all* must join in the training?"

"No, they draw lots in some way and take a certain percentage, twenty-five in the hundred, perhaps, and this paper says they must be sound

in wind and limb, and over 5 ft. 4 inches in height. Thou, Daniel, has no hope of escape there."

"No, for I am full 5 ft. 8 inches."

"And thou, Mark?"

"I believe I am just 5ft. 4 inches!"

"And thou art of age, but thou, Daniel, art not. Really it was a pity thy father apprenticed thee at thirteen, for 'prentice lads are exempted, but thy indentures for seven years have run out, and I cannot claim thy services. We have a good many Friends in this Meeting who, I fear, are liable. If they are drawn and refuse to serve, or to pay a substitute, they are fined, and their goods are taken, if they have any; otherwise it means gaol, where I do not desire to see either of you, although our forefathers suffered for righteousness' sake in far worse gaols than ours at Moulsham. But there!—it is no use borrowing trouble, your names may not be drawn, or some other way of escape may be provided for you. Are you going out this evening?"

"I mean to look in at my uncle's," said Mark, as he left the room.

"And I thought of taking a brisk turn on the Broomfield Road, as the moon is full, and then I may call at Robert Marriage's."

"Ay, do—and do not hurry back for nine o'clock reading if thou prefers to stay; our good Friend Mary Marriage is a wise counsellor, if

thou cares to lay this matter before her. It will be a testing time to many of our young men Friends—may they have grace to uphold their principles."

Away went Daniel, and his light, springing steps soon left the town behind. The season was late April, and the air was mild, and full of sweet spring scents. The glorious full moon looked down on the dewy meadows, making the scene almost as light as day.

The shop hours were long, and Daniel loved to get away from the noise of the paved streets, and the scent of corderoy and leather, for a breath of fresh air of the evening, although the dead level of the country round Chelmsford seemed but a poor substitute for the rolling Downs and fresh sea breezes of his native Brighthelmstone. It was his only chance of solitude for spiritual communion, and greatly valued by him, for Daniel was one of those happy souls who could not remember the time when his Father in Heaven, and his loving Saviour had not been to his spirit living realities, guiding, helping, comforting, in all the boyish trials and temptations of school and 'prentice life. But Daniel was a man now—twenty last October—and he felt that April evening as if the first testing time of manhood was coming upon him. His whole nature and education revolted from the thought of military

service—the idea of being trained to send his brother men to stand before their time at the Judgment seat of Christ, was most appalling—men who were fashioned in God's image, and although nominally "enemies," were human beings, with places and families of their own, where hearts would be broken by their non-return. No, a militia-man he could never be. Would it be right to pray that his name should not be drawn? Daniel was shy and sensitive, and shrank from the publicity, the sneers, and uncomprehending abuse, that he knew other Friends had had to encounter who refused military service. Could he ever face that? And prison! To be locked in alone in the unsavoury cells—the same where the very lowest criminals were housed—to hear the key turned in the lock, and know that one cannot get out, except at the caprice of the gaoler, and when released to be pointed out as the man who had refused to serve his country, and, perhaps, his master's business suffering thereby—that business which he had taken such an honest pride in improving. Daniel stood leaning on a meadow gate, feeling that the path before him was full of thorns. But in the sweet silence the comfort came—old words of Scripture, conned long ago, had a new meaning. "God is faithful, Who will nor suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with

the temptation, also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it." It was enough. Daniel laid his fears aside, and walked briskly back to Chelmsford. In Conduit Square he rapped at the door of a large private house, and was soon ushered by a maid into a pleasant parlour, lighted by a wood fire, as well as a single dip candle in a tall silver candlestick, with silver snuffer tray beside it. A sweet-faced, motherly Friend rose to meet him. "Well, Daniel, this is pleasant to see thee, for I am all alone, my Robert has driven my girls over to see their cousins at Witham, and will stay the night. How hast thou been faring of late? Are things going well in the shop?"

"Thank thee, Mary Marriage, all goes well there, but hast thou heard that all young men's names are demanded for the Essex troop of militia?"

"No, indeed! Then that was the meaning of the paper the lackey left here to-day, but we have no men of the right age in our household. I suppose there are several in Friend Boyce's?"

"Only Mark Gainsford and myself," and into the sympathising ear Daniel poured all his hopes and fears, for Mary Marriage, the principal minister of Chelmsford Meeting, was one before whom shyness and reserve fled away, and she had long recognised in Daniel Pryor Hack

a character who was being led by Divine grace to become a power for good in the church and in the world.

"I am afraid I am a sad coward," said the young man. "I shrink so from the publicity—and from being shut up in that dismal, dirty gaol, all alone."

"We will come and see thee," said Mary Marriage, smiling. "Cheer up, Daniel! If this trial comes to thee, grace will be given to bear it, as it has been given to many a faithful soul in the past. Does thou remember when we were at Colchester Quarterly Meeting three years ago how interested thou wast in seeing the cell where young James Parnell laid down his life triumphantly for the truth? The grace that helped him is still available for thee, and Mary Pryor's grandson need not shrink from following Divine leadings. Thou knows how her faith saved the unseaworthy ship *Fame*, in which she had been led to embark for America sixteen years ago?"

"Yes, my mother has often told me, and I remember how delighted we all were to welcome her back. She is the best of grandmothers, and writes to me still, although so old and feeble."

"I expect I may have the privilege of meeting her next month, as I heard she was coming to thy aunt Savory's for Yearly Meeting, and I will tell her about thee, and how we Chelmsford

Friends value thy company." And Daniel took leave, feeling greatly cheered.

The Boyces were just preparing to retire for the night. "Take a fresh rush with thee," said the mistress. "Mark has been gone some time, and his will be out."

Daniel took a rush from the long box on the sideboard, lit it at the candle, and mounted the stairs, holding it in his fingers. Mark greeted him, "I am glad to see that new rush, I have just shifted the last half inch in the pinchers, and it would be out in a few minutes, and I want to talk to thee."

Daniel substituted the fresh light in the primitive pinchers, stuck into a smooth block of wood; and proceeded to undress, while Mark went on: "This Militia is a hateful business. One minute I feel one ought to go—for, after all, they are only trained for defence in case an enemy lands here—and surely we ought to keep out Boney's hordes from desolating England as they have desolated other lands. What wouldst *thou* do, Daniel, if the French were to land?"

"Honestly, Mark, I cannot say. It would, as thou sayest, be a terrible thing, but Friends say that even that would not justify a Christian in taking up arms—doing evil that good may come."

"Yes," said Mark, uneasily. "I know all about that view, but thou knows my family are

not such strict Friends as thine, and why should we men be led by the opinions of the Society—the ministers and elders are not our masters—we are free to do what we think best; it does not matter what *they* think."

"No," said Daniel, slowly, "they are, as thou sayest, not our masters. 'One is our Master, even Christ.' The question that matters is what *He* thinks."

Mark was startled. He knew well enough that Daniel was of a religious turn, but never before had he heard the sacred name from his lips, and he felt almost shocked at the suggestion that the Redeemer of the world should know and care what course two young country-town shopmen took in the matter of the Militia.

"Look here, Daniel," he said. "I don't want to go into training. I always meant to be a real Friend, but to be jeered at as a coward and perhaps sent to prison, I can't face it."

"It will be hard enough, but there is no use in borrowing trouble, our names may not be drawn, or some other way of escape may arise. They cannot distrain on our goods, for neither thou nor I have any, but a few clothes and books. I believe the fine is £10. Friend Wright, of Norwich, paid £40 for a man to go as his substitute—that does not seem to me quite consistent, but Friend Wright has a large family of little ones, and

we must not judge him. But, Mark, I believe, if we are drawn, strength will be given us to take the right line; we need not worry; farewell," and Daniel blew out the rush, and turned to his own corner of the room.

A few days went by, and a notice was left at the shop that all men of military age were to appear at the Shire Hall for the drawing of the Militia lots. Many were the consultations among young Friends. There were fifteen in the Meeting of military age, several of them struggling young farmers, to whose business the months of absence for training would have been fatal, and many were the grumbles they heard among others of their calling who declared the paying of a substitute would be the ruin of their prospects, and roundly abused the militia system, although they had no scruple against fighting, if other men did it!

On the Saturday Daniel saw, driving into the town, the high gig and strong grey horse of William Grover, the genial old tradesman from the town of Stansted Mount-Fitchet, who in Essex went by the affectionate nickname of Friend-in-need Grover. Innumerable were the thoughtful kindnesses the young folk of the Society received at his hands, and to Daniel he was always particularly kind, as coming from the same far-away town of Brighthelmstone, and likely to return

there, to help in his father's shop, and worship in the new Meeting House lately built upon land which William Grover had inherited from his father, and gladly sold to Friends for the purpose. The good man had heard of the Militia summons, and one after another of the men concerned was visited, sympathised with, and encouraged to stand firm to Friends' ancient testimony against all war. Shopmen were not at liberty on a Saturday, but on the Sunday morning William Grover came early to Joel Boyce's, and had a talk with each young man separately, strengthening the wavering Mark, and speaking to Daniel of the privilege of being called to suffer for Christ's sake. "Remember, Daniel, it is the man he can trust whom the Captain of the ship puts in the hard places. If thy name is drawn, the Lord has singled thee out to testify for Him, and He will uphold thee and bring thee through the trial in a way that will bring honour to the Master's name."

William Grover walked with the Boyce household to the old Meeting House, which was inconveniently crowded. The visitor took his place among the local elders, and although he spoke no word, all Friends knew that he had come to sympathise with the young men in their difficulty, and felt the presence of the good old man in their midst to be a help and strength.

On Monday morning Daniel and Mark joined the stream of young men of military age who obeyed the summons of the Lord Lieutenant, to appear before him at the Shire Hall. When the room was full, that dignitary addressed them from the platform, speaking of the honour and privilege of being called to defend their country, but the mass of faces before him looked decidedly sceptical as to that honour, and most were pale and anxious. He went on to say that, wishing to do the drawing with the utmost fairness, he had caused each name to be written on a card, and put into a bag—here he raised it from the table, and shook it energetically—and he had brought his own child to draw the names. A pretty little boy of five, with fair curls, and wide, wondering blue eyes, dressed in his first breeches, of green velvet, with large buttons, and a broad muslin frill round his neck, came forward at his father's bidding, and the chubby hand was thrust into the bag, and drew out a card.

"Every man who hears his name must pass into the next room to be measured, before being finally enrolled," announced a loud voiced clerk, and taking the first card from the child, he read out in a stentorian voice "William Stubbs." There was almost a giggle, and whisper of "a good riddance," as a low, dirty figure shuffled off, drink and vice stamped upon his

countenance, because for twenty-years Bill Stubbs, the idle poacher, had been a nuisance in Chelmsford.

Again the child dived into the bag. "Daniel Pryor Hack" was announced, and pale and erect the quiet, refined young Quaker followed Bill to the ante-room. One by one the others followed—Mark Gainsford, and four other young Friends were amongst those drawn and formed a group on the window-seat—Amos Avery, a young farmer, looking very much disturbed. "They will distrain, and probably take my choice sheep, and sell them for far below their value," he said; "and there will end the prospect of sending my little Bethiah and Tom to Islington School, for the guarded education that their mother so much wishes. And thou, Thomas Gopsil, will probably lose that fine black mare which thy father gave thee as a colt."

"That I shall not," said Thomas Gopsil, with a twinkle in his eye. "I have no effects whatever to distrain. I made my father a present of Black Delia this morning, and have his acceptance in writing. I don't say he may not give me an equally valuable present to celebrate my return from gaol."

"Then thou means to face it out, Thomas?"

"There is no other possible course for a consistent Friend," said the young man, briefly.

Mark shifted his position uneasily; could he face the fate which Daniel and Thomas were prepared for?

Now they were roughly called to come and be measured. Daniel and Thomas led the way; both were far above the minimum height. Mark came next; an old sergeant placed him against the board, and put the rule on his head. "If ye warn't a Quaker chap, I should say ye were tall enough, but ye are just a quarter inch below the mark, and we don't want the likes of ye, so be off with ye!" An order that Mark was not slow to follow.

Meanwhile the other five were quietly telling the military clerk who was taking names and addresses, that nothing would induce them to serve, and passed out of the room, followed by a storm of abuse, as white livered curs, from the soldiers present, which the jealous newly-enrolled were not slow to echo. "You will hear more of this; don't think his Lordship is going to pass over it. Serve you shall, or pay a stiff fine, or else be clapped into gaol."

Without making any answer, the Friends passed quietly out, Mark coming to Daniel's side as they walked quickly back to the draper's shop. Daniel spoke first. "Well, I am glad that Joel Boyce will not lose us both, Mark; it would be hard work for him to carry on the business with

only Tom and Jimmy. Thou mayst be glad thou stopped growing when thou didst."

"Thank thee, Daniel," said Mark uneasily, and then blurted out, "I took the heels off my shoes this morning, and they made just the difference; dost thou think that was a mean trick?"

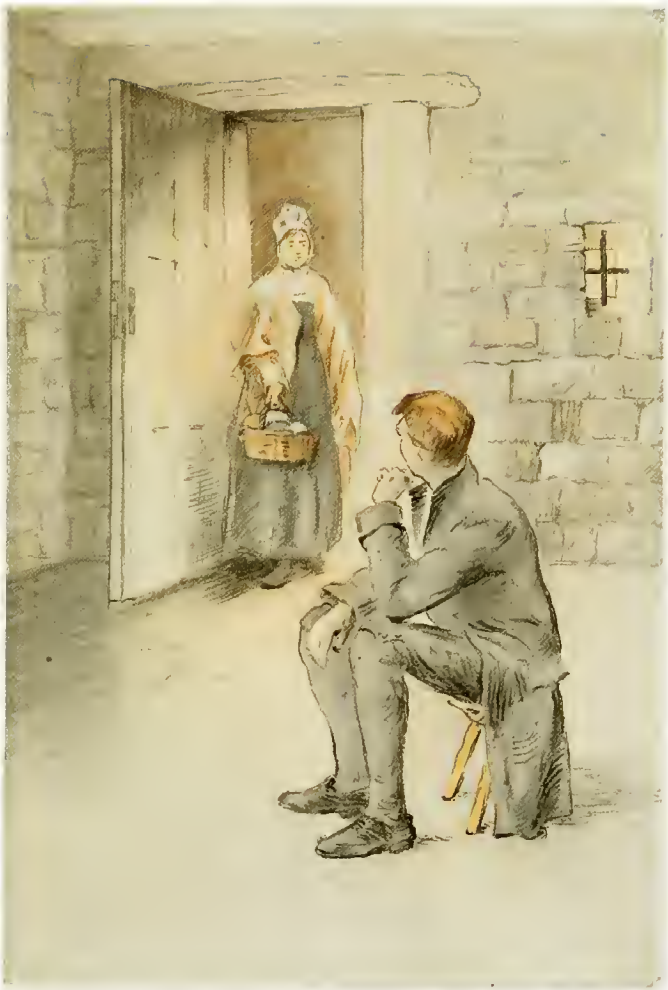
"Well, no. Thou really art not up to the standard, and the way has been made easy for thee. Show thy thankfulness for it by giving thy mind to the business when I am away."

But for several months the young Friends whose names had been drawn were kept in uncertainty—a peculiarly trying time to one of Daniel P. Hack's sensitive spirit, and in the introspective diary which it was the fashion in those days to keep, he blames himself severely for "reluctance to resign my will to the Divine will." At length the hour of trial came. Amos Avery's sheep were taken and sold, and Daniel, Thomas Gopsil and George Wood, who had no possessions worth seizing, were haled before the magistrates, and condemned to one month's imprisonment.

Away to the squalid little prison at Moulsham they were marched, and each shut in a cell alone. Daniel looked around him, and his fastidious taste revolted from the straw mattress, with the couple of dingy blankets, at the barred window hung with cobwebs, at the dirt in every corner.

In the evening the door was unlocked and some coarse food set upon the table, but he could not touch it, and sat on the stool with his face buried in his hands, feeling bitterly his separation from the kind friends, and homely comforts to which he was accustomed, and indignant that a country which prided itself on its love of freedom could, in the year 1814, condemn men of honest life to such indignities for their Christian faith. Hours passed, and the struggle went on, until the blessed sense of not being alone stole upon him—there was One Whom no bolts could shut out. "No," thought Daniel, "for the Christian there is no such thing as solitary confinement," and when from the street below came the midnight cry of the Town Watchman "All's Well," Daniel responded with his whole heart, "Yes, all *is* well," and lying down on the uninviting bed, he slept better than he could have thought possible.

Quite early next morning he was surprised by a visitor, for prison rules in those days were elastic, and a piece of silver in the gaoler's hand would unbar doors. There stood Mary Marriage, in her fresh grey cotton dress, and Friends' bonnet, with a basket covered with a white cloth. "Here, my dear lad, I have brought thee some food. I know thou art a bit squeamish in thy eating; there is a chicken pie, and these turnovers



MARY MARRIAGE VISITS DANIEL IN PRISON.

are from my first early codlins, and there is a pat of butter cousin Eunice sent thee. Thou knows she has five little sons, and she bade me tell thee she and other mothers bless thee and the rest for withstanding military tyranny. She feels your faithfulness must tell on public opinion, and that what you are enduring now, may save her boys from ever being drawn for the Militia."

Much cheered, Daniel accepted the food, and ate with good appetite, meanwhile telling his motherly Friend how, by Divine grace, he had been able to echo the Watchman's cry. She assured him that food would be daily provided, and suggested that he should ask the gaoler to allow him to clean his cell. That functionary, perhaps touched by the cheerful civility of the three young Friends, not only provided them with brooms, and pails, but allowed them to walk together in the prison yard for a great part of the day. Here, through the iron barred gate, they got many a kindly greeting, and it was a particular pleasure to Thomas Gopsil when his father would ride in from their farm on his favourite mare, and put her through her paces outside the gate. Daniel and George, who were not horsey, being rather amused at his devotion to Black Delia.

Joel Boyce came the first day, with a change of linen, and Daniel's Bible, and William Grover made the long journey from Stansted again to

cheer the prisoners, and left with them William Penn's two books—*No Cross, No Crown*, and *Fruits of Solitude* — which Daniel read over and over again, and also a letter which reached him from his grandmother, the eminent Minister, Mary Pryor, in which she expressed her thankfulness that her grandson " was willing to suffer for the glorious cause of truth and righteousness on the earth."

Compared with modern stringent prison discipline, and vindictive sentences on those who hold the same faith, that month's imprisonment seems a trifling thing to have suffered, but it was with thankful hearts that the young men walked forth free at the end of their term. Only a very few more Friends suffered imprisonment for refusing military service for more than one hundred years after these three were released.

The following year Daniel Pryor Hack returned to his native town of Brighton—as it began to be called, and helped his father, with the same business ability which Joel Boyce had valued. As years went on he disliked the trade of supplying finery for the gay followers of the Prince Regent, and gave up the drapery trade, but filled his time with useful work, up to the great age of ninety-one for his native town as well as a minister in good esteem among Friends. Always hospitable, and genial, he loved to tell young Friends of his

experience in Chelmsford gaol, and of the thoughtful kindness which had softened that hard time; and if the gentle, meek, old man could be said to be proud of any part of his life, it certainly was of having suffered for conscience sake.

AN EMPEROR'S VISIT

1814

ROADS were matters of great importance in the year 1814, when railways were not, and passengers and goods alike could only move about drawn by horses on the great highways. The Brighton to Dover road was one of the best, and, as it wound through the fertile fields just north of Pevensey Level, it was broad and solid, well made of the black and white flints from the range of rolling Downs which ends in Beachy Head, a few miles away.

Here it passes a farm with the picturesque name of Amberstone. The gate stands under a group of tall Scotch firs, and behind is a roomy, substantial, square house, built of brightly glazed black bricks. It faces the north, and is far from beautiful, but to Nathaniel Rickman, who had built it to replace a tumbledown old farmhouse, it was all that was admirable!

To it, in the last year of the eighteenth century, he had brought his bride, Mary Robinson, from a farmhouse on the Surrey border, a comely woman, very straight and upright, and, tradition

says, with the rare gift of walking gracefully in pattens!

Mary Rickman had need of all her powers, for children had come fast, and the life of a farm housewife in those days was no sinecure.

On the warm Sunday noontide of June 26th, 1814, she stood under the fir-trees with a sleeping infant in her arms, and two older toddlers clinging to her skirts, watching for her husband and elder children coming home from Gardner Street Meeting. Meeting-going from Amberstone was far from popular, except to the grave, reserved Nathaniel Rickman, for in those days that Meeting was invariably held in silence, and died the inevitable death soon after.

A few old people from the scattered hamlets of the large parish of Hurstmonceux attended, and to them, as to Nathaniel Rickman, it may have been held to profit; but to the children, and to the bright young governess, Mary Ann Dean, fresh from a living London Meeting, it was a weekly penance. To-day, the dead silence, only relieved by the buzzing of a large fly, had been especially oppressive. The heat had made the children restless, until the two youngest dropped asleep, and forgot their troubles.

Not even the parents, good Friends as they were, had ever thought to prepare those young minds for the hour of worship, and so relieve

the dull meaninglessness of it for them. "Father expects us to know everything we ought to, without any telling," said a lad once, ruefully; and probably the young people from Amberstone felt the same. Mary Rickman saw the weary party coming towards her, and opening the gate, she spoke brightly :—

"Children, I have news for you. Tom Fairs tells me that there will be a great sight this afternoon. The King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia, who have been visiting our Prince Regent at Brighton, are to come by on their way to Dover, and you will see them. Think of that on Caleb's fifth birthday!"

What an excitement! fatigue was forgotten. Mary Ann Dean, who knew more of the world, was most interested of all, and delighted at the prospect. Little Mary asked the inevitable child's question, "Will they really have gold crowns on their heads?" and had to be assured that such pomps and vanities were unsuitable for travelling.

"Dinner is ready now," said the mother. "I prepared it earlier so that we can watch by the gate," and soon in the farm kitchen the party sat down, with man and maid at the same table, to partake together of a huge mutton pudding, which had been simmering in the great black pot over the wood fire since early morning.

"Remember, children," said the governess, "that these Kings have come to England to settle up the peace after the long years of war. They are called the Allies, because they joined together against Napoleon Bonaparte, who is now safely shut up in the island of Elba."

"A good riddance, too," said the eldest boy. "How we did hate old Boney when everyone was saying that he was going to invade England, and would certainly land in Pevensey Bay. Father did not say much, but I know he had the waggons ready to take us all up country to Grandfather Robinson's at Hunts Green."

"There, there, Edwin; that danger is over now, and we will forget it. When I was at Lewes lately Cousin John told me this Emperor of Russia is a man of most religious and benevolent character. In spite of the arch-enemy Bonaparte having desolated the fair city of Moscow, and whitened the plains of Russia with the bones of his wretched conscript soldiers less than two years ago, the Emperor when in Paris last month, went to see the poor, dying ex-Empress Josephine, and promised to befriend her children.

"And when he was in London, Stephen Grellet and William Allen had a concern to visit him with an address, and found him of a most tender and open spirit. The gay doings at Brighton Pavilion must have been little to his

taste. I am glad you children should see such a ruler of a great Empire."

"There are no seconds to-day," said the mother, as she rose from the table. "You know we are going to have Caleb's birthday feast at supper-time, so we must make it up then."

Caleb, in his little white smock and grey breeches, with a face like a full moon, fairly beamed with delight. The mother thought the pleasure of preparation was better than a "surprise," and on the previous day the small boy had watched, entranced, while she made gingerbread, and luscious tarts of raspberry jam, one with a marvellously crinkled edge, and a pastry "C," reposing on the jam, for his own especial eating. When white sugar was fourteen pence the pound, as in that long ago war-time, the frugal housewife could make little jam, and it was only used on great occasions.

"Jane and Betsy, you may hurry with your washing up, and when the kitchens are quite tidy, you can come to the gate to see the fine sight," said the mistress.

Nathaniel Rickman bade Edwin bring a chair for his mother, and picking up the wicker cradle containing the sleeping baby, he carried it out and set it down on the grass beneath the fir-trees, and the whole family gathered there, a striking group. Tall Nathaniel Rickman, in his First-day

suit of snuff-coloured cloth, with large white cravat, and drab beaver hat with low crown and broad brim; his comely wife, with her muslin cap and kerchief; Mary Ann Dean, a fine handsome brunette, her cheeks blooming with excitement, her glossy black hair twisted into a high knot, which showed through the high crown of her London made Friends' cap like a bird in a cage; the tidy, smooth-haired children in their grey frocks and white pinafores; no wonder they attracted attention from the passers by.

Soon the sound of horse hoofs was heard, and along the road from the westward came outriders, followed by a team of four black horses, drawing what, to English eyes, was an oddly shaped foreign carriage. The liveries of the servants told the watchers that it was the King of Prussia. He had his two sons with him, and all three bowed, rather mechanically, as they dashed past.

After an interval came more carriages, odder in shape than the first, and, wonder of wonders, the drivers and other servants had beards—long, bushy beards, streaming down over their gay liveries!

In the second carriage a gentleman was looking at a map, but he glanced up, saw the group under the fir-trees, and called to the red-bearded coachman, "Halt! halt!" The carriage stopped, and the gentleman, in a plain brown

travelling suit of English make, alighted, after a few words to the lady who sat beside him. With a pleasant smile he advanced to Nathaniel Rickman, and spoke in slow, but correct English, "I pray you, sir, are you Quakers?"

"Certainly we are," was the answer, courteously given, but with no "flattering title."

"And this is your home? I have much desired to see a Quaker's house; may we see yours?" A ready consent was given, and turning to his sister, the Duchess of Oldenburg, he said "Oui, oui!" The lady alighted, and came smilingly forward to Mary Rickman with both hands extended: "How do you do? I am glad to see you."

She wore a sweeping dress of lustre, a quiet coloured Indian shawl, fastened by a large jewelled brooch; but her bonnet!—the little Quaker girls looked at it open-mouthed, for it was prodigious in size, of white satin, with enormous ostrich feathers, half a yard high, and of a bright rose colour.

"May we see your abode, Madame?" said the Emperor, offering his arm to Mary Rickman. She took it, saying first, "Stay here with baby, children. Mary Ann, wilt thou take my keys, and bring refreshments to the best parlour?"

The children were nothing loth. The Emperor was far more of an ordinary mortal in their eyes

than his coachman, with his long beard waving as he called strange words to his horses, four noble greys, who stood champing their bits, and tossing their manes with impatience at the sudden halt, their harness gay with bright brass and red tassels.

Into the best parlour stepped the little procession, a large, low room, with a table covered with a grey cloth, and more books than would be found in most farmhouses of those days. The walls were whitewashed, and a single picture—the engraving of William Penn's Treaty with the Indians—was over the fireplace, and on either side hung what had been Mary's *chef d'œuvre* of artistic work in her maiden days—two broad bell-pulls in fine worsted work, with pink roses, blue convolvulus, and a yellow flower unknown to botanists. Poor old treasures! Many, many years after they still hung there, dingy and moth-eaten, over a great heap of wheat, when Amberstone house was empty and used as a granary!

When the royal guests were seated, the Emperor told how he had been much interested in Friends in London. They had even attended, under William Allen's guidance, a meeting at Westminster, and had been much struck with its simplicity and solemnity.

"What is your profession, Sir?" he asked.

"I am a farmer; I send butter and wheat, and wool and fat cattle to the market town."

"That is well. I take great interest in agriculture. I notice in England that the farms have a great air of prosperity. I wish it were so in my own land. Are many Quakers farmers?"

"A good many. It is an honest, necessary trade, in which we are not called to violate our consciences."

"Ah, you are men of religion—a religion which extends to your everyday life. I would that we had Quakers in Russia."

Here Mary Ann appeared with a tray, displaying the best cut-glass decanter, wine glasses, and plates of gingerbread and tarts.

"Is this your daughter?" said the Duchess, smiling at the blooming girl.

"No, she is their teacher, and my kind helper. My seven children are all young, and there is no school within reach."

"May we offer you some refreshment?" said Nathaniel Rickman.

"Thanks, I never take spirits," said the Emperor.

"This is currant wine, made by my dear wife of fruit from our garden."

The Emperor sipped a glass, and said, "I congratulate you, Madame, on your skill in making excellent wine," which was echoed by his sister, who also praised the gingerbread.

Little Caleb, who had broken away from his sisters, was peering in at the crack of the door. He saw the dish of tarts handed, and the imperial hand hover over it—then—oh, horror! the tart with the crinkled edge was chosen, and transferred to the imperial mouth, and a profound disbeliever in the divine right of kings sped away to tell his grievance to the little group at the gate.

"May we see the rest of the house?" said the Duchess, and their hosts led the way to kitchens, dairy, and little parlour, and up the broad stairs to schoolroom and bedrooms, light and airy, the beds and windows hung with snowy dimity curtains, and the somewhat scanty furniture in the most immaculate order, for Mary Rickman was a housekeeper whose premises would bear inspection at any time.

"How neat it is," was the repeated comment of the visitors.

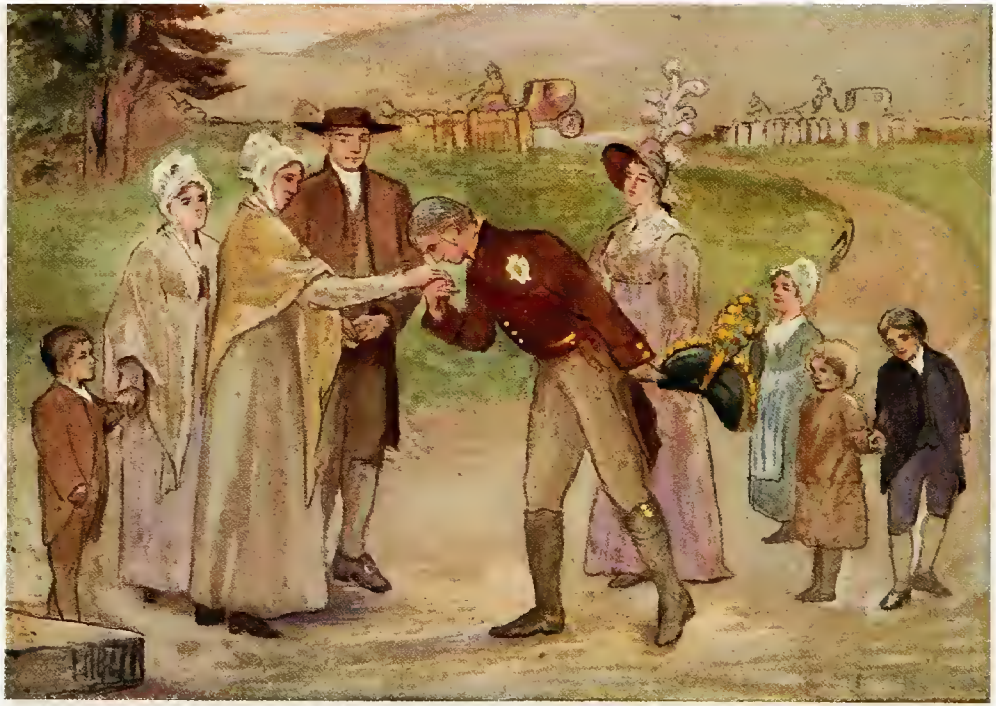
They returned to the parlour, and lingered, pleasantly chatting, evidently charmed with the quiet simplicity and self-respect of these Quaker country folk, who could be respectful without servility, and friendly without familiarity. They seemed loth to leave, and as they passed out to the carriage, the Emperor said, "We shall often think of you. Commend me to your friends, for I love the Quakers. I bid you farewell, dear Madame," and the Emperor bowed, and

kissed the hand of Mary Rickman—the capable, work-worn hand—as if it were that of a princess, repeating the ceremony on the hand of the young governess, to her great elation.

He then kissed the cheeks of his host, and the two elder boys, who received the salute with sheepish bashfulness, but Caleb made a sudden dive under some low shrubs as the Emperor turned to him, and vanished. "He is shy," said the mother apologetically, as the Duchess, bending her magnificent bonnet, gave her a sisterly kiss, and also to Mary Ann and the little girls.

They mounted the carriage, the Emperor leaning out to say, "Farewell again. We are going to Russia. It is a long way off, but you will not forget us." The red-bearded coachman cracked his whip, the four grey horses plunged eagerly forward, and, followed by the other carriages which had been waiting in the rear, they started off at a good pace, and soon a cloud of dust was all there was to be seen of their distinguished guests.

"That is truly a good man," said Nathaniel Rickman. "His countenance was a pleasure to look at. My dear," and he turned to his wife, "I am glad we had not quite decided what to name the baby. He must certainly be Alexander, after our noble visitor."



THE EMPEROR'S VISIT.

"Oh, *what* a letter I will write to my parents!" exclaimed Mary Ann. "They will be astonished to hear that their daughter's hand has been kissed by an Emperor! Oh, children, we shall never forget this day, and the honour of having entertained so great and good a man!"

"He ate *my* jam tart," said little Caleb.

DORCAS BROWN'S SCHOOL

1825

"THAT's for the tell tale tit!"

"Ben! Rube! You bad boys! Let I bide —I'll tell mother—O—w—w." The protest ended in a loud scream, and no wonder, for several handfuls of burdock burrs were being rubbed into the victim's curly red hair.

The poor little maiden had been contentedly arranging acorn cups on a flat stone under a tree by the roadside, having quite forgotten that she had innocently betrayed a plan of mischief at breakfast time, bringing down on her brothers a sharp warning from the father, which they did not dare defy, but, with the primitive instincts of the savage, they planned reprisals on the culprit.

But help was near at hand. From the farm buildings appeared the care-worn mother, the coarse apron and none too clean lilac sun-bonnet proclaiming it was milking time. She aimed a cuff at the nearest urchin, but he dodged it with the skill of an expert, and vanished behind the hay-stacks, followed by his brother.

At the same moment a passer-by, whose steps had been hastened by the cry of distress, came up —a tall matron in a Quaker bonnet, drab cotton gown, and spotless kerchief and mittens.

The mother began to disentangle the troublesome burrs from the child's ruddy hair, which, being almost of the consistency of wool, was no easy task. Dorcas Brown's instinct was always to help, so, after consoling the sobbing Janie with a cake from her basket, she proceeded with capable fingers to assist in the removal of the burrs.

" I'm fair ashamed you should have seen this sight, Mrs. Brown," said the mother. " They twins of mine are getting that owdacious they fair maze me, and their father is away to Horsham market to-day, so they are up to more tricks than usual."

" I know what boys are," said Friend Brown, smiling, " but it is a pity these little lads of thine should not be at school, as they are too young for regular work. Nothing like employment to keep children out of mischief."

" They did go to Dame Parson's up to Lady-day, but she didn't learn 'em much, and now that the poor old lady is bedridden there is no school within reach. I suppose we ought to teach 'em ourselves as we be both scholars, but there ! you know what a dairy farm is, with the chicken, and pigs, and all—seven days a week

and no rest. It's all we can do to take 'em to church on Sundays, and make 'em behave themselves for an hour or two. We would send 'em to school fast enough, and pay for it, if only some one would start a school in Giles Green."

"There ought to be one," said the Friend, thoughtfully. "There, Janie, that is the last burr. Thou hast stood still like a good little maid," and with a kind pat on the plump cheek, and a friendly farewell to the mother, Dorcas Brown took up her basket, and walked on to the village.

Here again the untrained condition of the juvenile population was forced on her notice. The date was in the early twenties of the nineteenth century, when George IV. was holding his orgies under the pepper-pot pinnacles of the Brighton Pavilion, drawing to the place a crowd of fashionable imitators, who poured down the main road in coaches, post-chaises, and private chariots, often stopping to change horses at Giles Green.

Several of these vehicles were ranged in front of the large inns, and around them were crowded ragged, noisy children, to whom the travellers were throwing pence, and amusing themselves with the wild scramble.

"Sheer cadging," said Dorcas Brown to herself, regretfully. "And some of them belong to

honest folk who worked hard and never dreamed of begging before the King brought this idle rabble down our road—it will be the ruin of Giles Green if it goes on unchecked. I wonder if we could start a school, if Parson Ward would help? But he is a poor, sickly creature, who never does a thing more than he must. The difficulty would be to find a teacher," and the good woman walked on in deep thought.

She and her husband, Seth Brown, had not had much schooling themselves, but they knew the value of education, and had strained every nerve to send all their children to the Friends' School at Croydon, and the girls had even had the advantage of a year at the Godlee's very superior school at Lewes. She earnestly desired that her poorer neighbours might have some training, and the concern on her mind strengthened as she pondered over the subject.

After calling at the general shop, kept by a good Friend named James Cox, to leave some kindly token of good-will for his sick wife, Dorcas passed on to a farm-house on the outskirts of the village, the abode of an elderly couple, with a deaf daughter, to whom she had a message. She had not heard that an elder, widowed daughter, Thirza Finch, had returned with her children to live there, so was surprised as she approached the open door to hear a child's voice

read slowly and distinctly, " and it fell not ; for it was founded upon a rock."

Just within the door sat a superior looking young woman, with a black ribbon over her white mob cap, sewing. At the table beside her stood a boy of eight, reading from a large Bible spread out before him, while a girl of ten, seated on a low stool, was stitching away at a linen garment like a woman.

" Why, Thirza, art thou come back to the old place ? I did not know that, although I heard of thy trouble," said Dorcas, kindly, as the women rose to greet her.

" Yes, ma'am, when I lost my good man with the fever, father and mother offered house-room for me and Bessie and Jim, and I longed to get them away from London air, and ways, so I came. But we must not be a burden, and if you know of anyone who would give me work, I should be thankful."

Dorcas sat down, and spoke kindly to the children, commended the neatness of Bessie's sewing, and heard Jimmy read the whole parable, which he did slowly and carefully, and without a stumble.

" Thy children are a credit to thy teaching, Thirza," she said.

" Thank you, ma'am ; I do my best for them, for I can't abear to see children run wild. You

know I was in good service before I married, with Quakers, like you, ma'am, and the mistress took such pains to teach me all kinds of sewing; and the girls used to bring their lessons into the kitchen, and I picked up a good deal from them; and they, finding I had a mind for it, taught me to read and write, and sum, and lent me books. I have been so thankful that I am able to teach my children, as I find there is no school in Giles Green—and I couldn't afford the pence if there were."

"Couldst thou not start a little school, Thirza? I know several who would like to send their little ones to be taught."

"Oh, ma'am, I am not scholar enough for that!"

"If thou canst teach thy own children, thou canst teach other people's, and if thy mother has no objection, this large kitchen would make a good school-room."

"Mother would not mind; she and Hannah are mostly busy in the dairy, or with the fowls, and they cook in the scullery. But you see, ma'am, I couldn't start a school without forms, and slates, and books, and I could never afford them. Such children as I should get would not pay more than threepence at most, and if I had a dozen, or even twenty, it would hardly pay me for my time."

" It wants a bit of thinking over and planning, but, Thirza, as I came here I was looking for guidance how to find a teacher for Giles Green. Does it not seem as if the Lord had directed me to thee ? Think it over, and I will talk to my husband and see thee again before next First day."

A woman of boundless energy, Dorcas Brown never hesitated when her interest was once aroused. Her husband was sympathetic, and agreed that the first step was to see the Rector, so the very next day she penetrated to his study, where he sat, in dressing gown and velvet cap, by a fire, although it was early autumn.

" Thank you, Mrs. Brown, I'm middling—only middling. I've had a touch of my old symptoms lately, and there were the two services on Sunday and a funeral on Tuesday—so laborious—so laborious ! And next week Farmer Pratt's two girls must needs get married on the same day, and one man's name is John Thomas, and the other's Thomas John—so confusing ! I feel quite worried lest I should marry them to the wrong sister ! " And the Rector sighed over his heavy responsibilities.

But his intentions were quite virtuous, if little was asked of himself, and when Dorcas unfolded her plan for the needed village school he was quite ready to agree. " My dear wife and I have often said that it is a shame that no one

looks after the village children—they certainly are wild colts, and if you can get them taught it will be a good thing, Mrs. Brown."

"But thou sees we shall need help. The gentry round might be willing to subscribe, so that Thirza Finch can have a small regular wage as well as the children's pence, besides the first outfit. Could'st not thou invite a few of the leading people here, and talk it over?"

The Rector consented. An afternoon was fixed, Dorcas undertaking that notice should be given, and he saw her depart with a sigh of relief: "And I, as Rector, must take the chair—so laborious!"

The notices were written out by Dorcas's own children, in the exquisite copperplate hand so carefully taught in Friends' schools of that date, and the boys and girls, with the help of an old pony, delivered them at all the larger houses within four miles of the village.

The result was most gratifying. The large parlour at the Rectory was crowded. Seth Brown was much respected as an upright and kindly neighbour, and the village magnates were quite ready to listen to his wife's plans. She had Thirza Finch, in her decent black, at hand, and she made a good impression on all. Before they separated, a committee was formed to start a village school, with Seth Brown as treasurer,

and enough guineas were forthcoming on the spot to provide the simple outfit, and six months' salary.

Of this committee Dorcas Brown was the moving spirit. She found that Friends in a neighbouring town were interested in a charity school, which she visited, and took careful note of the best apparatus, and where it could be obtained. She arranged that Mrs. Finch should spend a whole fortnight with the mistress to learn school methods; she interviewed the parents of all children of suitable age in Giles Green who could afford the mighty sum of twopence a week, and the school was opened triumphantly with twenty-five pupils, when the acorn picking was over and the days grew short.

The very first names to be enrolled were Ben and Reuben Burtenshaw, the irrepressible twins, and their little sister Janie. Their energies, rightly directed, made them eager to get on and to emulate the superior accomplishments of Jemmy Finch. Thirza proved to be a born disciplinarian, firm and gentle, and although her knowledge was small, it was thorough, and all that was needed at first to till such virgin soil.

Dorcas Brown was almost daily at the school, encouraging, smoothing away difficulties, roundly scolding the idle or dirty, offering prizes for the perfect repetition of the Ten Commandments,

or of the Twenty-third Psalm, and giving Bible lessons which taught rules for daily conduct with a homely downrightness seldom heard in these days.

Her daughter Patty, fresh from Lewes school, fixed patchwork by the yard to initiate little fingers in the arts of hemming and sewing, and the sons mended quill pens, and wrote moral copies in books which were so precious that the rule was that only four lines should be filled in the hour's writing lesson.

The reputation of the school grew. From farm-houses miles from the village the children came; little girls in red cloaks, tripping along the muddy roads in pattens which left prints of circles marvellously interlaced; and boys in grey linen smocks, heavy, hob-nailed boots, and soft, yellow-leather "bootlegs" with bright brass buttons, which reached halfway up their thighs, bringing their books and their dinners in flat, home-made baskets of plaited straw.

Soon the kitchen of Thirza's mother was crowded out, and Dorcas Brown negotiated for a large disused wheelwright's shop, which was roughly fitted up for the purpose. The gentry visited, and approved. They found the sewing they gave was neatly done, and that tidy, obedient little maids and house-boys could be found there, for in those hard times boys and girls of twelve years were compelled to earn their own living.

The numbers became too large for a single teacher, even when Bessie Finch became an efficient little monitor, so Dorcas Brown made the bold experiment of importing a schoolmaster to Giles Green, fortunately finding one who had been an assistant in a large London charity school. He came—a pale, lame man named Mark Ray, and Thirza was glad to turn over to him the bigger boys and girls, so that she could devote her time to the little ones and the needlework. So well did they work together that it led to a closer connection, and Mrs. Finch became Mrs. Ray within a twelve-month.

Still the school grew, and children had to wait for admission; although the building was very poor, and much out of repair. Dorcas Brown's busy brain was again at work, and to build a real school-house was her next ambition.

A suitable plot of ground in East Lane was selected. It was found to belong to a Jew, who was not only rich, but benevolent, and so well did the Quakeress plead the cause of the village children, that he made a free gift of the desired plot, making it over to trustees, one whom of was always to be the Rector of the parish.

Next came the effort for the building itself. The time was in the "hungry forties," and few middle-class folk had cash to spare, but the Friends, Seth Brown and James Cox, offered to

lend horses and waggons without charge to fetch the needful timber, bricks and tiles, which was a good beginning. There is no doubt that Dorcas was an exceptionally good beggar! She called on the neighbouring gentry, and put before them the duty and privilege of a share in training the children; she wrote to wealthy and benevolent Friends at a distance, pleading for her village, and her appeals were nobly responded to.

The school was built—ugly enough without, but decent and roomy within, with desks for a hundred children, in two rooms divided by folding doors.

It was a joyful day for Dorcas when she saw the fruit of her labours, and the really excellent teachers working to so much more advantage in better premises. So the school prospered for nearly twenty years from the autumn day when the children's need was first laid on her heart.

But unexpected difficulties arose at last. Gentle, indolent Parson Ward died, and the living was given to a successor as unlike him as could well be. The Rev. Adolphus Binks was an energetic, fussy, consequential little man, with a large idea of the authority of the Church, and of its clergy, and a perfect horror of dissent. His genuine zeal, and brisk reading and preaching were a pleasant change. The church people liked him, and he soon had a considerable following in Giles Green.

In the parish from which he had come he had himself started a village school, where little natives were taught to order themselves lowly and reverently to their betters. A school on more democratic lines was quite beyond his comprehension, but he began to visit in East Lane, to take an active part as Chairman of Committee, and also wished to become the treasurer, which post Seth Brown willingly resigned into his hands.

At first the faithful workers of so many years appreciated his interset, but very soon friction arose, and his fussy interference in trifling matters which he did not understand, brought at last a remonstrance from plain-spoken Dorcas Brown, which was hardly politic.

That the Rector of the parish should have been practically told to mind his own business by a woman, and a dissenter, was unbearable to Mr. Binks, and Mark Ray and his wife, long accustomed to her common-sense plans, were so impertinent as to uphold her authority! The Rector bided his time. After seeing Seth and Dorcas drive off to a distant Quarterly Meeting, he summoned a packed committee of Church folk only, and there aired his grievances.

The school, he said, was not being satisfactorily taught—not on Church, and practical lines. The last time he visited it Ray had actually

got a map of the world displayed, and the older boys were reading the story of the Mutiny of the Bounty. What did farm workers want to know about Captain Bligh and his adventures?—it would only make them restless and discontented.

Then he had gone to the girls' room to see how they were getting on with a set of linen shirts he had given them to make, and he found them reciting together "The Graves of a Household," which Miss Patty Brown had taught them. "Now I have no objection to 'Let dogs delight,' or 'The Little Busy Bee,' but to find future cook-maids spouting Felicia Hemans over my shirts! —it won't do—it won't do."

Then Ray was not really up to his work. A village schoolmaster should always play the organ and train the choir, and this fellow, by his own confession, hardly knew one tune from another.

Worst of all, he had found that the Catechism was not taught, and when the children recited the Commandments they actually said, "Thou shalt not kill," instead of "Thou shalt do no murder." The Bible version was so liable to be misunderstood by the ignorant—Why, we shall have them refusing to defend their country, and objecting to assist at a hanging; and where would England be then?

There was also a lack of good manners in the school. The Rays did not know their place, and

as for that dissenting woman, Mrs. Brown, she acted as if the school belonged to her!

At this Ben Burtenshaw, now a spruce young farmer, bristled up. "Well, sir, it *is* her school! Giles Green would have had no school at all but for her. She has planned it, and begged the money, and built it, and taught in it, year after year. I can say if Reuben and I are worth anything, it is all owing to that good woman and her school, and scores of old pupils will say the same."

But Ben, the chivalrous, was in the minority. There were other newcomers besides the Rector, and petty jealousies were rife. It ended in the Rays having notice to leave, and Dorcas Brown being turned off the committee.

Her feeling may be imagined when this news reached her. She had not been brought up a "Friend," or "inured to habits of self-restraint," and in spite of her husband's exhortations to patience, her pungent tongue, as she expatiated on her wrongs, fanned the storm which convulsed the village of Giles Green.

The Rector brought his musical and Church-trained schoolmaster from his old parish, but there were only a handful of children for him to teach, for most of the parents refused to send them to the newcomer, and begged the Rays to stay in the village and start another school.

The old wheelwright's shop was available, but how poor and dark it seemed after the East Lane rooms!

Dorcas, although now getting elderly, was not the woman to sit down in despair, and she at once set about providing a second school-house for the village.

The Jewish magnate, who really had a profound respect for the energetic farmer's wife, actually gave her a larger plot of land in a more central situation than East Lane. Again the Friends teams hauled the materials for nothing, again letters pleading for help were sent far and wide. Righteous indignation brought some gifts, and in a short time an excellent new school-house, with dwelling rooms for master and mistress, was built; with good promises of yearly subscriptions to supplement the children's pence, and more pupils than ever crowded to be taught in what was now known as the British School.

A department for infants was started—in those days a great novelty. Dorcas Brown, who had the excellent gift of discerning native capacity, found in one of her own servants the faculty of controlling, as well as loving, little children, and had her trained for the work of Infants' Mistress. This post she held for many years, hundreds of children rising up to call her blessed, and crowding in tears around her grave when she was called away.

The Church school struggled on, helped, after the exit of the Rev. Adolphus Binks, by magnanimous gifts from the Brown family, but the British School continued to be the popular one.

"Mrs. Brown put our village forty years before others in the school way," said an elderly farmer, when speaking of his early advantages.

Time went on. Education became compulsory; inspections and standards changed the old homely, done-by-hand methods of earlier days, and the school which started with Thirza Finch's two children is now attended by nearly five hundred.

The trust deeds have passed from the hands of Dorcas Brown's grandsons into the hands of the County Educational Authority; but the memory of one courageous woman may well be written down to encourage other pioneers in fresh departments of work for the public good.

A BOTANICAL WOOING

1834

It was a day of brilliant sunshine, the first of August, 1834, that a solitary pedestrian was toiling up the steep slopes of a mountain in North Wales. Far below him gleamed a blue lake, and beyond its shores rose the peaks of Snowden and its lesser neighbours. The young man often turned round to gaze, for the scene was new to him, and he found the ascent laborious, being strangely out of practice of bodily exertion for a healthy man of twenty-six.

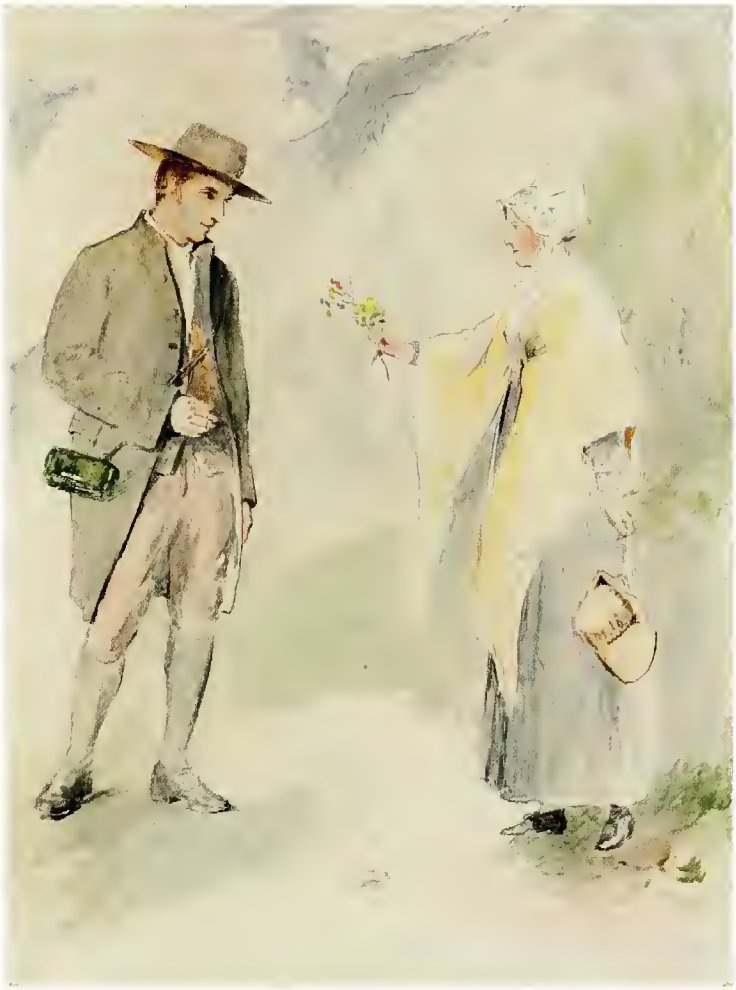
For five years past Samuel Clough had been in close attendance on his blind father, who had no other near kindred, and in his old age (for he had married late in life) leaned more and more on the quiet, dutiful son, until the young life had been absorbed by the old to an extent which was hardly right.

But the long strain was over now—the father had passed peacefully away a month before, and Samuel was treating himself to the well-earned rest of a tour among the mountains, which he had often wished to see.

His outward appearance was very unlike a modern tourist's, he being clad in a suit of fine brown broadcloth, of the plainest Quaker cut, with a broad brimmed, drab beaver hat, shading a thin face, with wistful dark eyes, and prim little side whiskers above his large white cravat. Over his shoulder hung by a strap a roomy tin vasculum, in which from time to time he stored some treasures of the almost Alpine flora of the Snowdon Range.

But still the plant he most desired, the purple Saussurea, eluded him. Here and there he tramped over the hillside, peering among rocks and roughly built stone walls, but in vain; until he sat down by a stile, also built of stone, to rest and plan for the continuation of his search.

The place seemed so utterly lonely that he felt it like an apparition when a figure came bounding down the steep pasture towards the stile, a girl in the first bloom of womanhood, and to his astonishment, in plain Friends' dress. Her little silk bonnet hung by its strings to one arm, a close muslin cap covering wavy fair hair, and encircling round cheeks, and blue eyes, brilliant with exercise. Her stout little shoes and white stockings fairly twinkled as she danced up to the stile, and in her hands, with other flowers, were several sprays of the coveted saussurea!



A BOTANICAL WOOING.

It was evidently no small shock to the damsel, as she mounted the stile, to find herself not alone, and in a moment her air changed to one of prim propriety, as Samuel, shy man though he was, instinctively rose, and offered a hand to steady her descent of the steep stone steps. But botanical enthusiasm overcame shyness, and he ventured a question :

" I ask thy excuse, but may I know where the saussurea which I see thou hast obtained is to be found ? Thou hast been fortunate to light on it, for I have searched all the morning in vain."

" Oh, it was no credit to me that I found it, for Dr. Nathan Fox told me exactly where to look."

" How extraordinary—for he also told me, but I have failed to find the spot. It was seeing it in his herbarium made me covet it for mine."

" Wilt thou have one of these sprays ? I have three—more than I really need."

" No, I thank thee, I make a point of preserving only those specimens which I gather with my own hands."

" How droll—I am grateful to anyone who brings me a new flower ; but thou canst easily get this. Dost thou see that pyramid-shaped rock at the top of this field ? There is a mossy, ruined wall runs from that up the mountain to

the left, and at the top of that, on the far side, thou wilt find the saussurea plants in plenty, also, quite near, grass of Parnassus, dear little woodsia fern, and other treasures."

"I thank thee; I will at once seek for it."

"Thou wilt have no difficulty. Farewell—my father is waiting for me at the ruined cottage below;" and away tripped the active girl, leaving Samuel to climb the steep pasture, almost dazed by the sudden encounter.

Few men have grown up with less knowledge of womenkind than Samuel Clough. His stern old father had discouraged society, and had a special aversion to his partner's four flighty daughters, the only other young Friends of their small meeting. Their step-mother, Jemima Hales, a Friend of the most rigid type, thought she could discipline the frivolity of the girls by dressing them with the severest plainness. Drab cotton bonnets, drab gowns, drab mittens and coarse shoes, had no effect on shallow natures which craved for pretty things. They were not allowed to learn drawing, even a love of flowers was discouraged, and so much did the mother dread "publications of a hurtful tendency" that the poor girls got no publications at all.

It is difficult now to imagine such lives of empty repression. There was no outlet for energies, or tastes, and no escape, except by the

way of marriage. What wonder that in after years several of them wrecked their lives by most unsuitable matches, and that now they were induced to make a set on the only eligible man within their reach. Many a time did Samuel turn into shops and buy needless articles, rather than meet them and their smirking overtures in the street. How different was the frank, friendly air of this blithe, active damsel of the Welsh mountains!

He found the desired plant, and returned to his hotel well pleased. The table d'hote had been a trial to him, for the inn was filled with two parties of noisy, worldly folk, who, he instinctively felt, were quizzing him. It was the more pleasant to him to see an elderly couple of his own denomination when he strolled into the garden to await the evening meal, and to be met with a kind greeting.

"Why, surely this is James Clough's son? —Samuel, I have heard him call thee. I am Robert Redford, and this is my wife, Rachel. I have often noticed thy care of thy blind father at Yearly Meeting. Thou hadst our sympathy when we heard of his decease."

"And Hannah Leslie was thy mother—dear creature, she and I were schoolmates, but I never met her after her marriage. Dost thou remember her?"

"Oh, no, I was only two years' old when she died."

"Then who cared for thee as a child?"

"My old nurse, Nancy—she is our housekeeper still, although getting rather feeble."

"And thou hast no near relatives?"

"No, both my parents were only children. I have some distant cousins in the west, but they are strangers. My old tutor (for father would never allow me to go to school) is my nearest friend now, and he advised me to take a month's holiday in Wales."

"We are doing the same. I promised my girls when the work for the emancipation of the West Indian slaves was over, I would treat them to a driving tour, and they are enjoying it greatly; especially the youngest, who has been a good deal with our cousin Nathan Fox, and learnt to share his enthusiasm for botany."

"It was Dr. Fox who introduced me to the study of plants. He came to prescribe for my father's eyes three years ago, but could not help them. He was very friendly to me, and made me promise to take a brisk walk daily, saying it would add to the interest if I had the object of making an herbarium. I have found a great variety even in our flat fields and salt marshes, but these mountain flowers are quite new to me, and very beautiful."

"Thou must have been the Friend whom my daughter Priscilla met this morning. She feared thou wouldst think her a sad hoyden, but she had lost count of time among her flowers on the mountain, and was afraid her father would be tired of waiting for her—ah, here they come. My dears, this Friend is Samuel Clough, whose mother was a dear schoolmate of mine. This is my daughter Catherine, and this is Priscilla."

Both girls shook hands pleasantly; Catherine, who was a few years the elder, made some remark on the beauty of the evening, and Priscilla asked, "Didst thou find the saussurea?"

"Yes, I thank thee, thy directions took me directly to it. Had I not met thee I should have given up the search in despair."

"The beauty of the weather suits with the thankfulness of our hearts that the slaves are to-day free," said Robert Redford. "We have been much engaged with Fowell Buxton and his friends in working for this great object, and it seems almost too good to be true that the long desired liberty is attained at last."

"My dear father took a great interest in emancipation, and had every report read to him of the progress of the work. He knew Fowell Buxton well in former years, and much admired his zeal in following up William Wilberforce's

work," said Samuel, who was thoroughly versed in the struggle for the negroes' freedom.

"Some are anxious lest there should be riots in the West Indies to-day; the slaves are but children in mind, but we trust that thankfulness and sobriety will prevail. Fowell expects to hear about the middle of Ninth month how this great day passed off."

"How hard he has worked!" said Catherine "and his daughter too. We have felt it a privilege to work with Priscilla Buxton. Didst thou hear of the great petition from the females of Great Britain that the slaves might be set free? There were 178,000 signatures, all collected in ten days. Fowell Buxton had to ask three of his colleagues to help him to carry it to the Bar of the House. Several women Friends spent days sorting the sheets and pasting them together, after we had carried them from house to house asking all women to sign. Very few refused—it was a most interesting task. Was it done in thy town?"

Samuel remembered it had been spoken of, and how Jemima Hales had refused to let her daughters assist, saying, "It was quite unsuitable for young females." Yet these much more attractive maidens had done it simply and naturally, feeling it a privilege to help the oppressed.

Then Robert Redford, in a lighter tone, said, putting his arm round Priscilla's waist: "Ah,

it is emancipation day for someone else besides the slaves! Wouldst thou believe, Samuel, that the youngest of my seven children has come of age, so my authority as a father ceases to-day. This young woman can now do legally whatever she pleases, and I cannot prevent it!"

"I don't think thou hast found that coming of age made much difference to the rest of us, father, dear," said Catherine, smiling.

"Perhaps not, Kitty, but Pris is different. Pris is the youngest, and a spoilt puss. None of the rest of you, on your twenty-first birthday, came bounding down a mountain like a wild Welsh goat, crying, 'I have found it! I have found it!' and then showing me only a little purple flower not half so pretty as many that we see along every roadside."

"How dost thou fancy that I may make a bad use of my independence, father?"

"Why, we might see thee in a green silk mantle, and a pink bonnet, like that gay young Liverpool madam in the inn there, and *I* could not forbid it, because thou art an infant no longer."

Priscilla laughed merrily. "Dear father, thou need'st not be afraid of my wishing to make such a gaudy scarecrow of myself—I like the Friends' dress, though I do not want to wear a bonnet as long as mother's—it shuts one in so."

"Thou need'st not, little one. I can trust thy mother's daughters to observe simplicity and moderation, and it does not follow that what is right for one generation should be imposed upon the next." Then, resuming his tone of whimsical complaint, he went on: "Only to think that I have now no one to obey me! All my children are of age, and I married thy mother at meeting. If it had been at church now, she would have promised to obey, and I should still have someone to order about."

To Samuel this playful tone was entirely new, and very astonishing. His father would have been shocked at such "light conduct," in a man of Robert Redford's standing, and Jemima Hales would have acidly compared it to "the crackling of thorns."

He glanced at Rachel Redford, whom he knew to be a minister in good esteem, but she was listening with an amused smile, although she made no attempt at repartee.

It was Catherine who took up the subject. "Priscilla Buxton, whose wedding day it is (I suppose she is Priscilla Johnston by this time) said that with a man like her Andrew, she had not the least objection to promise to obey. She showed us the order of marriage service in her prayer book, and she seemed to like it, although her parents were married at meeting."

"I did not like it," said Priscilla, bluntly; "There was so much of it, and some parts did not seem to me at all nice, but I suppose church folks are used to it. But our Friends' ceremony is so much more simple and straightforward."

Here the supper bell rang. Rachel asked the lonely young man to sit with their party, and with her gentle, motherly talk put him at his ease as he had never felt in any woman's society before.

As they rose she said, "We must retire early, for we have a long day's excursion to Beddgelert to-morrow. Would'st thou like to join our evening reading in our lodging room before we separate?"

Samuel went gladly. A single dip candle gave but a poor light, and after opening a rather small Bible, Robert Redford said, "Younger eyes than mine are needed for this print; here, Prissy, my child, come and read for us, as it is thy birthday. Read the 103rd Psalm, my dear one. That will echo the thankfulness of our hearts this great day."

Chairs were not plentiful, and Samuel sat by Catherine in the deep window seat. He never forgot that scene. The shadows flickering on the whitewashed wall, the great bed with its four posts and dark green hangings, the good, silver-haired couple seated side by side, and Priscilla by a small table, the candle lighting her fair hair and snowy kerchief as she read.

How beautifully she rendered the Psalm. It was not only the reading of a sweet-voiced, educated woman, but of one who evidently entered into the spirit of every word. "The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all who are oppressed," she read; and the thoughts of the listeners were with the long oppressed race who had that day obtained their long delayed freedom. Priscilla finished the latter verses in a tone of triumphant praise, then closed the book, and a deep silence fell on the little company. It was broken by the mother giving heartfelt thanks for the great event of the day, and with cheerful good-nights they separated.

The following morning Samuel stood with Robert Redford on the steps of the inn, awaiting the carriage. "We have a Welsh coachman," he said, "or we should hardly have ventured to come on mountain roads with our London horses; but David Griffith is a careful driver, and manages the steep ups and downs well. We spent a night at his native village, near Bala, where he had not been for twenty years."

"Yes," said Catherine, as she joined them; "we wondered what his prim little English wife would have thought had she seen him with the tears running down his cheeks, and a dozen old friends trying to shake hands at once, all talking Welsh at the very top of their voices! They are

an excitable race, but David is sober enough in the usual way—here he comes," as a comfortable carriage, with a pair of strong bay horses, and a capable looking driver drew up at the door.

Samuel saw them off, and then started on his own excursion. He had bespoken a guide to take him to Lyln Idwel, and the strange chasm called "The Devil's Kitchen." The man could speak so little English that he was not interesting, and was evidently much puzzled at the strange gentleman's habit of putting little weeds carefully into a tin case.

Samuel found himself wondering if Priscilla had found this or that rare flower, and when they met at supper had a number to show her: the Rose-root, the Lesser Thalictrum, the Butterwort, the Star Saxifrage, and even a little tuft of the purple saxifrage, which had delayed its blooming by some months, as if to please the botanists.

It was Saturday evening, and Robert Redford said, "There are other Friends staying in the village. I met Louisa Sims, of Manchester, and her three brothers. I should like to ask them to join with us on First day for a period of worship, but in neither inn is there a private sitting-room to be had, so I do not know where we could sit down."

"Oh, father," said Priscilla, eagerly, "could not we have meeting in that rocky nook among the fir trees that we found the other day? There is a fallen tree to sit on, and if we carried up the rugs we should be quite comfortable. It is well away from any path, so we are not likely to be interrupted."

"A very good thought, Pris. I will go down to the other inn presently and ask the Sims family to join us at ten o'clock, so that we can walk up slowly together, as it looks likely to be a hot day."

The plan was carried out. When the party reached the nook, Priscilla took the rug from Samuel's arm and spread it over a log. "There, dear mother, that is the gallery, and thou and father can sit side by side as you do at home."

The other rug softened a flat rock where Catherine and her sister, with Louisa Sims between them, seated themselves. Her three brothers and Samuel found seats near, and the Quaker silence fell, broken only by the songs of larks over the open pasture near.

Robert Redford sat with both hands on his stick, his chin resting upon them, and his eyes closed, apparently unconscious that he was not in his usual seat in the suburban Meeting House. His wife permitted herself as much outlook as her tunnel-like bonnet allowed, and sat with her

eyes fixed on the distant mountains, and an expression of deep peace on her sweet face.

The well-trained younger people sat motionless, so that a squirrel came on the branch above them, and peered down inquisitively, and a robin alighted at their very feet. After some twenty minutes of this silence, Rachel Redford spoke.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help," she began, and went through the Psalm, dwelling on its promises, especially upon "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, He shall preserve thy *soul*," saying that true spiritual life is untouched, and even strengthened by trials and afflictions. The promise is not for our bodies, but for our souls—the part that will endure: "for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

She ceased, leaving the last solemn words impressed on the minds of her little audience. Again silence reigned, until the eldest of the Sims brothers knelt on the grass, and began to pray aloud, while the others rose reverently, the men baring their heads to the soft mountain breeze.

To Samuel it was almost startling. In his Quarterly Meeting only a few elderly people appeared in the ministry, and spoke much of taking up the cross, and of making covenant by

sacrifice; but here was a man no older than himself speaking as to a loving Father, giving thanks for their beautiful surroundings, and for the peace within which gave the power to enjoy them to the full; pleading that the rest and refreshment might go with them to their homes, and that they might experience more than ever the joyous privilege of living for the furtherance of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. He rose, and again there came a long silence, until Robert Redford turned to his wife, and broke up the meeting by the usual handshake.

Quietly the nine worshippers took the path down to the lake side. Here the Redfords invited Samuel to stroll a little farther before returning to the inn. He lingered with Priscilla behind the rest, picking the velvety blue Skullcap, the Marsh-pea, and that daintiest of fairy bells, the Ivy-leaved Campanula; and noting the clumps of rank green leaves of the Globe-flower, although its time for flowering was long past.

"Didst not thou feel that was a rightly held meeting?" said Priscilla, shyly. Her granddaughter would have said "ideal," but the word was not in use in the year 1834.

"I never attended a better," Samuel answered warmly. "Our meetings at home are too stiff and formal, and I always feel that some are sitting

amongst us against their will, and that is enough to spoil the spirit of any meeting. To-day we all seemed in one mind. I have felt it a privilege to be with you."

"What a pity we cannot always have so beautiful a meeting house," said Priscilla, laughing. "Only in rain or snow four walls and a roof have their advantages, I must confess."

The intense clearness of the distant landscape was ominous. That night the weather changed and a winterly wind came howling down from the mountains, followed by torrents of rain, and when the travellers gathered for breakfast they could see through the mist that every tiny stream which trickled down the hoary sides of Moel Siabod was swollen to a mad cascade, plunging down to join the river below.

Loud were the laments of their fellow guests in the inn, for both parties were obliged to leave that morning, and drove off in a coach in the pelting rain. Only the Friends remained, much relieved not to be shut in with such uncongenial companions.

A wet day in a country inn is accounted a disaster, but Rachel Redford was essentially a home-maker—wherever she was became cheery and cosy. Finding that her husband was chilly she ordered a fire in the parlour, and announced that it was just the day to get letters written to

absent members of the family, and the writing of letters was a serious matter in those days When the recipient had to pay shillings for the postage, the writers took care to make it worth the sum!

So Catherine and her parents, with freshly mended quill pens, and large sheets of paper to be crossed and recrossed, settled down to this employment; while Priscilla, telling Samuel that the fire was an opportunity to dry their blotting papers, fetched her botanical press, and spread them out carefully, while the young man followed her example.

"It is only making hay," said the girl merrily; "I do not really care for pressed flowers. I only dry them for my lame cousin, Edwin, who, poor boy, has no greater pleasure than a new plant."

"Dost thou not wish to keep a record of the plants thou finds?" said Samuel, rather disappointed.

"Oh, yes,—this is my herbarium," and she opened a large book, on the pages of which were exquisite sketches of wild flowers in all the glory of their natural colours.

Samuel was enchanted. He had hardly ever seen a botanical illustration, and these looked like the flowers themselves.

"It is very unscientific," said Priscilla, "for I go on painting them just as I find them, without

classifying. I have two books full already at home, but started a new one for this wonderful journey. I always write where they came from, as well as the English and Latin names ; and the books are as good as a journal, recalling all sorts of pleasant excursions. I must go to work now, for with what I found, and those thou brought me on Seventh day, there are at least a dozen that I want to paint. She seated herself, with a tiny china palette, a few dry cakes of paint and camel's hair " pencils," and quite rapidly, the new species blossomed under her clever fingers.

Presently, the letters being ended, Robert Redford proposed to read aloud. They had with them the " Life of William Wilberforce," intensely interesting to those who had shared in the Anti-Slavery struggles. Samuel, after so many years practice with his blind father, was an unusually good reader, and glad to oblige these kind friends, and he read on, hour after hour, while Catherine and her mother sewed, Priscilla painted, and father alternately listened and nodded.

It was all so homelike, so entirely a new experience, that Samuel felt he was in another world. The easy family talk was fresh to him—the loving pet names, " Kitty, love," or " Pris, my dearie," in such pleasant absence of formality. In all

his life he had never once been called "Sam"—he wondered if he would ever be?

The meals were cheerful, and the hours flew by while the storm raged without. When twilight fell, poetry was suggested. The mother contributed long pieces from Cowper, Catherine from Wordsworth, and Priscilla added Pringle's spirited ballad "The Neutral Ground," her anti-slavery work having aroused her sympathy with "Brown Dinah, the bondmaid."

Tuesday morning was still stormy, and another quiet, happy day was spent. Priscilla had finished her painting, and was now stitching diligently on a frock for a four months' old niece, the child of Catherine's twin sister, whom they hoped to visit at Birkenhead before returning home.

"Is she thy only grandchild?" asked Samuel of Rachel Redford.

"Oh, no, I have a dozen; we have two sons and two daughters married."

"Yes," said Priscilla, "I began my career as a maiden aunt at ten years old."

"Which means chief playfellow," said her mother, smiling.

"Now, mother, thou knows I always go when there are measles or mumps. I am a perfect dragon when medicine has to be taken! And little Tom said, 'When auntie Pris comes to take care of us, *she* won't stand any nonsense!'"

"Little Tom is a pickle, and has had far too much of his own way. Thou must come and see us at Tottenham, Samuel, and thou wilt probably find the house overrun with children."

"Thank thee, Rachel Redford, I shall esteem it a privilege. I cannot tell thee what a boon it has been to me to meet such Friends in my lonely wanderings."

"Then come on with us to Llandudno," said Robert Redford, heartily. "Thou canst share the box seat with David, and we can find a corner for thy bag."

What a chance for Samuel! If adequate words were hard to find his face made up for deficiencies. The Redfords were glad to do a kindness for one so lonely; Catherine, who was often bored with her young sister's enthusiasm, was glad she should have an outlet for botanical talk; and Priscilla was frankly pleased to have a companion who shared her tastes.

The Wednesday was a day of glorious sunshine, and as they drove by the shore of Llyn Ogwen Samuel spied the pale blue spikes of the water Lobelia, and with the aid of David's driving whip fished out specimens for both. Catherine had great skill in old-fashioned pencil sketching, and while she was intent on an old stone bridge the botanists found a green valley full of magnificent Royal fern, growing with almost tropical

luxuriance. When the seashore was touched there were yet new treasures of sea holly and yellow poppy, until Priscilla could not paint fast enough to portray the fresh beauties.

Samuel was more like a happy boy than he had ever been in his life, and there was something almost boyish about Priscilla, too, in her perfectly frank friendliness. Robert Redford found the young man well versed in political, philanthropic and business matters, and many were their sober talks; while to the good mother he was ever respectfully attentive, ready to carry out her slightest wish.

A fortnight passed, and they reached Chester, where Samuel was to take the coach southward, and the Redfords were to drive on to their married daughter's home. They wandered about the quaint old streets, and then paused to admire the Cathedral.

"How I should like to go inside!" exclaimed Catherine.

"You may," said her father. "I think Friends have been too afraid of their young people studying these monuments of old Christianity. Samuel, if thou hast no scruples against removing thy hat in a steeple-house, thou canst go with the girls. I should not advise a fracas with the verger over the position of thy beaver. Mother and I will go back to the inn. I am too

old to begin hat homage," and the good man's eyes twinkled merrily.

Samuel had no scruples. He removed his drab beaver as he entered, and all three stood silent and awestruck at the vastness and beauty of the Cathedral interior, the very first building of the kind the young people had seen. They happened to be quite alone, and went round slowly, commenting on fresh beauties in a hushed voice.

Presently Catherine sat down to sketch a pillar and Priscilla began reading the inscriptions on the numerous wall monuments.

" Look, Samuel Clough," she said, " this wall is covered with memorials of young men who were either killed in battle or lost in fighting ships. How dreadful! I never realised before what a loss to the country, as well as to their families, all these well-bred, well-educated young men are. And how they are lauded for this unnatural death! One would think that instead of a Christian church we had strayed into a temple to the god Mars! "

" I suppose that Friends can hardly enter into the view of the military class," said Samuel, thoughtfully. " And our testimony seems to go for so little. My father spent some months in gaol for refusing to serve in the militia in Napoleon's wars—"

Here a new sound stole on their ears. The organist had come in, and was beginning some soft, sweet music. Almost breathless they crept back to Catherine, and the three sat entranced until the chimes warned them to return to their inn.

In the evening Robert Redford proposed a walk. To the girls' surprise, Samuel said he would stay with their mother. When they were left alone he fidgetted about the room, then he sat down by her, and began breathlessly: "Robert Redford and thyself have been so unspeakably good to me that I feel I ought to tell you before I visit at your house that it is your Priscilla that is the chief attraction. I cannot tell thee how dear she has become to me."

"Thou hast only known her a fortnight," said the mother smiling.

"Yes, but *such* a fortnight has shown us more of each other than months of ordinary intercourse. I am a shy, awkward fellow, I know, but she is good to me, and I shall not rest till I try to win her for my wife, if I have thy, and her father's consent."

The mother looked thoughtful.

"She is so young, Samuel. Far less mature than her sisters were at her age. We are in no hurry to part with our youngest, and it seems hardly fair to ask her to make so great a decision

until she is more womanly. I hope thou hast not revealed thy feelings to her ? "

" No, I am sure she has no idea ; she is so fresh and innocent, so frank and friendly, that I am sure she has not thought of me in that way."

" Then thou must wait till we all know thee better. Thou seems a well principled young Friend. I was drawn to thee for thy mother's sake, and we have had a pleasant time together, but what dost thou know of Priscilla's home life ? What does she know of thine ? I think thou must consider how much thou art asking, and whether in thy home she would find her best happiness."

" I have no home," said Samuel, miserably, " only a dull, empty house." It flashed upon him that it was selfish to think of asking this bright young creature to give up the large and cheerful circle—the parents, brothers and sisters—for his solitary, unattractive self ; and to change the society of such as Priscilla Buxton for that of the Hales girls in a dull country town—it was intolerably conceited to have thought of such a thing !

Rachel Redford's kind heart noted his sudden depression. " Thou also art young," she said " Wait, and seek Divine guidance, and the way will open which is best for you both."

" I feel the place where I must live has so little to attract her," he said.

" If she cares for thee thyself, thy surroundings are of little moment. Again I counsel thee to wait for some months. Come and see us when thou canst, and do not speak until we give thee leave."

Samuel's golden castle in the air seemed tumbling about his ears. He was quiet almost to sadness that last evening together, but in the morning came a cheer. He was waiting for breakfast in the inn parlour when in tripped Priscilla. " Here is something to remind thee of Freedom Day," she said, and held out a sketch of the saussurea with the neatly printed inscription: " 1st of 8th month, 1834." He was greatly pleased, and shut it carefully into his botany book with warm thanks, and an hour later he started on his solitary journey to his solitary home.

How dreary the house looked—all the furniture heavy and dull, great, sombre evergreens blocking the windows, while the old nurse, always a woman of grievances, had a fit of rheumatism, and was dismalness itself.

Samuel set himself resolutely to work to make the best of the time of waiting. He bought books—such books as the Redfords had spoken of, poetry and good biographies. He remodelled the garden, cutting down overgrown shrubbery, and planting flower beds with his own hands,

with the secret hope that Priscilla might one day approve.

When at the end of September he was obliged to go to London on business, he spent most of the previous day scouring the flat country for belated wild flowers. The season favoured him, and a tin box full of treasures was laid before his lady-love.

The visit was a success, and was repeated several times. Whenever business took him to London he lodged at the Redfords, and shared their interests. Priscilla always met him with the old friendliness, but was still sweetly unconscious of his special interest in herself. Her family saw it plainly enough, but with the innate refinement of the best Quaker circles, they made not the slightest comment.

When Yearly Meeting came he was again with them, and it was well for a young man to have such a guide as Robert Redford, level-headed and large-hearted, for that Yearly Meeting of 1835 was one of the stormiest that has ever troubled the Society, party feeling over doctrine raging to an extent happily rare among Friends, and needing all the wise clerkship of Samuel Tuke to keep the peace.

Sarah Grubb asked leave to hold a "Youth's Meeting," to which all the young people went, and listened for over an hour to the strange, sibyl-like eloquence of that extraordinary woman.

Priscilla drew a long breath as they stood in the fresh twilight air at the gate of Devonshire House waiting for the carriage, and said to Samuel, "I know it is very naughty of me, for Sarah Grubb is a gifted Friend, but when she speaks I always feel like a cat stroked the wrong way! Dost thou think anyone was ever *scolded* into being good? That meeting of nine people on the Welsh mountain seemed to me a better one than this evening with nine hundred."

"And thy mother in the place of Sarah Grubb," said Samuel. "I have good cause to remember that meeting. It was the first in which the cloud of sorrow for my dear father seemed lifted—and," he added in a lower tone, "it was the first meeting I ever shared with *thee*, and that means more to me than thou knows at present."

The light was not too dim, or the dove-coloured bonnet too deep to conceal the crimson flush on the sweet face beside him, but at this moment David drew up his horses, as skilful a driver in London traffic as on mountain roads. During the drive home the conversation was left to Catherine, and her brother George, whose remarks on the sermon they had just heard were far from flattering.

Priscilla sat silent, glad of the darkness. How often she had taken herself to task for silly vanity when some inkling came to her that she was more

to Samuel than a sharer in his hobby, but now the tone of those last words was unmistakable. He, also, was silent, seeing that he had startled her, and longing more than ever for her parents' leave to speak. At last, when July came round, he had the much desired permission to make his wishes known.

Priscilla and her mother were to spend the month at Brighton, with an aunt who was there for her health. Thither Samuel followed them, and was met with tales of botanical triumphs—how some local Friends had taken her to the wild beach at Shoreham, where she had found the Star clover in its only British habitat.

"I would offer thee a specimen, but I know it is no use," said Priscilla. "Thou must go for it thyself; but to-day we have a treat for thee. Aunt has an old servant at a farm seven miles away, and near her house grow the most delicious orchises. I know the place, and will show thee—a place to make any botanist rejoice."

The long drive was pleasant, and near a belt of beech trees at the foot of the Downs the two left the carriage, promising to meet the elder ladies at the farm for tea.

Triumphantly Priscilla conducted her friend to the edge of the copse, where he found himself surrounded by rare flowers. The tall Cephalanthera grew as freely as nettles, the Butterfly

orchis attracted by its scent, and a few belated specimens of dark brown Fly orchis were still to be found.

Passing from the trees to the rough pasture above, they found sheets of the long-spurred Conopsea, and here and there the deep crimson buds of the Burnt-tip orchis. Better still, a few minutes climbing brought them to a place where the Bee orchis abounded, the plump, brown velvet bodies in marvellous mimicry of the insect. Here also were the drooping, coral-like buds and misty cream flowers of the Dropwort, and, best of all, a few early blossoms of the deep blue Round-headed Rampion! What botanical pair were ever in such a Paradise?

"Let us climb to the top," suggested Priscilla, and together they made their way up the steep, slippery grass, until, flushed and breathless, they seated themselves on the soft heather, with the lovely Weald of Sussex spread out like a map before them.

"I have not had such a climb since I showed thee the way to the Saussurea," said Priscilla, laughing.

"Thou hast showed me the way to a great many precious things since then—Priscilla," he went on earnestly. "Art thou willing to climb through life with me, as we have climbed the hill to-day? I have loved thee so dearly since

that first day I saw thee. Wilt thou come and make a home of my dull house, and let us endeavour to serve God unitedly, as I know we both desire to do ? "

" I will come with all my heart, Samuel," said Priscilla, softly.

Long they sat side by side, speaking of the past year, and the happy life before them, until Priscilla started. " Oh ! mother will be waiting for us, we must run," she said.

" Take care, my dear one, this slippery turf is not like Welsh rocks. Take my hand and we will go down together."

Priscilla stooped to pick up her case of flowers. " I hope, dear Sam, we shall not be unduly absorbed in botany," she said, sweetly.

A few months later, and what a change was wrought in the dull batchelor parlour. Flowers and books in abundance, a canary singing in the window, an irrepressible kitten frisking by the hearth, muslin curtains framing the view of bright flower beds, pretty china on the cheerful tea table, and, above all, the happy young wife, who always greeted " dear Sam " by the shortened name he first heard on the South Downs.

As years went by a little fair-haired Edith would stand up to say her First day verses, and when it happened to be Jane Taylor's " Little Negro Boy," and she lisped :

"It was on the first of August, eighteen hundred thirty four,
We told the poor black people we would serve them so no more:"

her father would take her on his knee, and tell her how on that day papa and mamma were very happy, as well as the poor slaves, gathering flowers on a Welsh mountain, and show her the framed sketch of the saussurea, which hung near his arm-chair. Nearly a dozen children grew up in that happy home, well-trained, well-educated, fitted to fill useful places in the world; but, to the parents' surprise, not one of them shows any interest in botany!

THE GAIN OF OPPRESSION

1835

PHILIP GLEN came out on to the private wharf which lay between a broad, sluggish river and an immense pile of buildings on which was inscribed "Jonathan Glen and Sons, Brewers and Maltsters," and paused to watch a group of workmen unloading a barge.

"Why are you working the crane to-day, Briggs? I thought Thwaite always did that himself."

"Thwaite has never turned up to-day, sir—he has not been himself for some days, and I'm afraid he is down ill."

"Does not his son work here?"

"He *did*, sir, in the bottling department, but he was always a helping his-self beyond his allowance, and when Mr. Joseph found him too boozy to know what he was about for the second time, he gave him the sack."

"Do you know where Thwaite's home is?"

"T'aint much of a home the poor chap has, sir. His missus tastes as well as the lad, and

they have drifted down to what is called Pint Pot Alley—that little blind turning opposite St. Chad's Church—the last house on the left, it is."

"I will look in and see Thwaite on my way home," said Philip, turning back to the office. The wharf foreman was rather a favourite employee of his, a silent, efficient man with a North Country accent, and Philip knew that he was a native of Jedderdale, where the freest and happiest times of his own boyhood had been spent. It was a bright April afternoon, and he found his brother had already left for home, so he set out alone on his quest for Thwaite. He had passed that narrow archway between respectable shops all his life, but had never been down the alley, and was horrified at the squalid appearance of the houses there, and the ragged children who squabbled among heaps of refuse in a court through which no wholesome blast of fresh air ever blew. Picking his way to the last house, he asked a frowsy woman, with her arms akimbo, who stood in the door, for Thwaite. She stared at the young men in his neat Quaker suit as at an apparition, but told him the front room upstairs was the Thwaite's lodging, but she didn't think anyone was at home.

Upstairs went Philip. The door was not latched, and he was startled to hear a low moan. He pushed it open, and there lay his valued

servant on a heap of dirty rags on the floor, quite alone, and looking very ill.

"Why, Thwaite, man, I am sorry to find you thus. What can I do for you?" he said kindly.

"Is that you, Mr. Philip?" gasped the poor fellow. "Oh, I'm so bad—downright clemmed, and I can't seem to get up to get a bit of victual."

"Shall I fetch you some brandy?"

"No, no, sir!—but if I could have a drink of milk." An empty yellow basin, the only household utensil in the room, stood on the floor beside him. Philip bravely picked it up, and in a few minutes was back with milk which he had procured at the shop at one corner of the alley, and a bag of sponge cakes from the other. Poor Thwaite drank thirstily, and slowly ate the soft food, and in a short time was visibly refreshed.

"How long have you been lying here alone?" said his master.

"Since morning, sir. I could not get up to go to work, and my poor wife, she got hold of the money in my pocket when I hadn't the strength to deny her, and off she and Ted went together —to the pub, no doubt, and got thoroughly boozed, for they have not been back all day, and oh, dear, I did feel bad!"

"I am going to fetch a doctor to you," said Philip, and in a short time he returned with their family doctor, whom he had been fortunate

enough to meet in the street. After examination he drew Philip aside, and told him the nature of the the illness. "It is nothing that could not be nursed in any decent home, but lying there, with no comfort or attention, the man would certainly die. We must get him to the Hospital at once."

"I will go and arrange it," said Philip, and sped away to the hospital, where he was well known, for did not the Glen family give twice as much for its maintenance as any other subscriber? A bed was promised, and with the help of the porter, and a cab—for ambulances were not invented in the year 1835—the poor sick man was transported to the Institution, and Philip did not leave him until he was in a good bed under the care of a kind, elderly nurse.

Meanwhile Philip's absence was causing some disquietude in his home. In the dining-room of a large, solid house, surrounded by fine gardens on the outskirts of the town, sat his mother, Eliza Glen, a tall, stout woman of sixty, in the very primmest Quaker garb of the day. The forehead was narrow, the mouth rather sour, and, unfortunately for her two sons, her mind ran in the narrowest of grooves. She had married rather late in life and had lost her husband just after he had added the "and Sons" to the name of the flourishing brewery, where for many years

he had prided himself on the production of "good Quaker ale with the hat on."

A very lucrative business it was, and the house showed every sign of wealth, although Eliza Glen fondly imagined it was a model of Quaker simplicity. The pictureless walls were painted drab, the chairs were covered with black horsehair, but the drab curtains were of the costliest damask, and the heavy furniture of solid mahogany highly polished. The thick Turkey carpet was of brighter tints, but that was only because drab Turkey carpets were unprocurable. Every article of china in the house was of plain white, unrelieved by a touch of colour or of gilding, but it was of the best quality, and specially made at a china factory for this household.

Here the simplicity of the tea-table ended, for the glossy, double-damask cloth was of exquisite texture, the tea pot and spoons of the heaviest silver, and the mistress prided herself on the quality of the provisions. Such home-made pound cakes, compounded of the freshest of butter and eggs, and the whitest of sugar, such muffins and tea cakes, such preserves and golden honeycomb, and tea at ten shillings a pound awaited the hissing urn in a tortoishell caddy—everything was of the very best that money could buy.

The dress of the mistress was in the same style

as her furniture, a flowing robe of the richest Irish poplin, dingy brown in colour, and a white China crape shawl, from which the fringe had been removed, giving place to a plain hem. Hemmed shawls, and a tunnel shaped bonnet with no curtain, were the good lady's idea of Quaker consistency, and were rigidly adhered to.

As she sat awaiting her sons her fingers were busily employed in knitting, for she prided herself on her industry, and would speak disparagingly of Mary Travis allowing her girls to "idle over books and drawing." Eliza Glen's knitting was of one unfailing kind—fine squares of elaborate patterns in white cotton, which, sewn together, formed large quilts, with which every bed in the house was abundantly supplied, but still she knitted on in comfortable self-complacency.

She had drilled her sons to strict punctuality, and Joseph came in dutifully at the moment that the grey-haired man-servant brought in the urn, into which he had just dropped a large red-hot weight from the kitchen fire. The boiling up of the water from this process was of short duration, so the tea was made at once, the mistress fretting the while at Philip's non-appearance. Joseph could only say he had left the office with an errand for the wharf, and had not returned. The tea could not wait, so mother and son sat down to the table and the good things

were dispensed, while the flood of fretful prattle went on about the sin of unpunctuality.

Still Philip did not come—a thing which had happened a few times in his boyhood, when he had been punished by missing his meal, and at the age of twenty-four the same fate awaited him, for when six o'clock struck, " the servants would want to wash up," and the table was cleared.

It was half-past seven when Philip came in. The mother looked up from her knitting. " Philip, I am astonished at thy conduct. Thou knows that punctuality at meals was what thy father always required. Thou might have told me at dinner thou expected to be late."

" I am sorry, mother, but I did not know then. It was a very urgent and unexpected duty that kept me," and he went on to describe the pitiful plight of poor Thwaite.

But he got no sympathy. That he should have been in such a low place, and in possible infection horrified his mother. He ought to have sent someone else to see after the sick man ; " and thou hast missed thy tea, too. I could not have it kept in till this time, as thou very well knows."

" Oh, never mind, I will make it up at supper," and Philip passed out into the garden to find his brother. The garden was Joseph's pet hobby. He was found under a south wall, tenderly

examining the buds on the beautifully trained peach trees.

He listened to his brother's tale with rather more sympathy, for he knew the value of Thwaite, and was astonished to hear that a man drawing so good a weekly wage could have such a wretched home.

"It is all the fault of his miserable wife and son—how strange it is that they cannot take their beer in moderation, it shows such sad self-indulgence," said Philip. "But I hope my going as I did may save the poor fellow's life, and we may be able to help him to better things."

"A hopeless task," said Joseph, drily, "when these low people become drunkards they are impossible to reclaim—women especially—they are too weak to drink moderately," and he dropped the subject by walking off to the glass house, where melons and cucumbers flourished in tropical heat.

At nine o'clock the table was again sumptuously spread, with cold chicken, ham, fruit tarts, cream, and other luxuries, and, of course, decanters with several kinds of wine.

Philip ate with the appetite of healthy youth after a long fast. His mother still fretted about the possibility of infection, and at her earnest desire Philip drank an extra glass of port to ward it off. He drank it as a matter of course, as he

had always done, little thinking that it was the last wine that would ever pass his lips.

At a quarter to ten the bell was rung for reading. The mistress sat at the head of the table with a large Bible before her, lighted by wax candles in massive silver sticks. In filed the old butler, the fat cook, and four or five younger maids, and sat down in a row near the door.

It was Eliza Glen's habit thus to assemble her household twice daily. In the morning she read straight on in the Old Testament, in the evening in the New. At the last verse of each chapter, she resolutely closed her eyes and sat in absolute silence for eight or ten minutes. The old butler might nod, the little kitchen-maid fidget, but that unbroken silence was always the same, and even the well-trained sons often found it oppressively long.

But to-night for Philip the silence was filled with a tumult of new feelings. The chapter read had been the fourteenth of Romans. In the early part his mind had wandered to the scene of human misery, which had so deeply stirred his kindly heart, but his ears were startled by the verse which he had never noticed before: "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

Had not Thwaite's wife and son stumbled grievously in neglecting the worthy husband and father in his weakness? And he, Philip Glen, whose earnest desire it was to serve his fellows as a Christian should, still drank wine! Could it be "good" to do so? He had been brought up to think it a daily necessity, but he had heard lately of certain Friends who had given it up, and actually seemed to keep in robust health! He knew that he relished it, and would miss the stimulant, but was it right to take all the good things of life while others suffered so sorely? He looked round his bedroom, at the Brussels carpet, the four post bed, with ample damask curtains, soft feather bed, and sheets of finest, lavender-scented linen, and contrasted it with the heap of dingy rags which was the only resting place of the Thwaite family. Philip was of a sensitive spirit, and there was little rest for him in the four-poster that night. He had re-read the chapter in Romans when he came upstairs, and over and over came the searching words of the concluding verse: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

He was very silent at the breakfast table next morning, and left the house early, in order to enquire for Thwaite before going to business. He found him mending, and speaking most warmly of the comforts and the kindness of the hospital—two things to which he had long been a stranger.

"But will you do me one more good turn, Mr. Philip?" he said. "My poor missus—I can't get her off my mind. My wages are due to-morrow, could you pay the landlady as lives below the week's rent in advance, and ask her to send in a loaf, and a bit of cheese, or something every day, so that I may know they have a roof over them, and don't go hungry? She is a rough one, but she has a kind heart. It is no use giving the money to Alice, for it would all go in gin—every penny that she and Ted earn by odd jobs is spent on drink."

"How did she learn this bad habit?"

"Ah, sir, it was all my fault, bringing her away from Jedderdale—the more fool I. I was ambitious, and wages were low there, and when my cousin, Mrs. Dench, who is landlady of the 'Spotted Dog' in this town, came to the old place, she told me of high wages, and chances in the town. I thought it would be better for my boy, so pulled up sticks and came. But my Alice never took root here; she missed her garden, and the beasties—we always had a couple of pigs, and bees, and a fine flock of geese on the common. She used to go fretting to Mrs. Dench, who told her there was nothing like a drop of gin for low spirits, and so it has gone on. The boy got sickly too, and she gave him ale to set him up, but it pulled him

down instead, and now at nineteen he is a mere drunken sot."

"Could not you take them back to the country?"

"I fear it is too late, sir. I seem to have lost all hope. This illness has been coming on a long time and I felt I should soon be out of my misery."

"But better times may be in store for you, Thwaite. Take heart, man, and I will do what I can to help you."

Philip went on to Pint Pot Alley, and after bargaining with the rough landlady to provide food and shelter, he made his way upstairs, and found Mrs. Thwaite and her son but just aroused from their drunken sleep; sober now, and much bewildered as to what had become of the husband.

Philip spoke sternly and strongly, telling the wife how the doctor had said the man would certainly have died from neglect, and soon poor Alice was in an agony of remorse, ready to promise anything if she might see her husband. He told her that afternoon if she went sober and decent to the hospital, she would be allowed to see him, and then hastened away to the brewery, going through his usual share of the work there almost mechanically. When the brothers went home to the early dinner, Philip followed old James into

his pantry with a request that a glass of water should be set for him.

The old butler gazed at him with horror. "You ain't never going to upset your inside with that cold stuff, Master Philip?"

"It is no colder than the ale, James," said Philip, laughing.

"But water, sir,—such poor stuff. Let me get you out the claret if you don't fancy ale to-day."

"No, James, I've made up my mind to drink water at dinner and supper for the present, so say no more about it."

"Eh, but the missus will be main vexed."

Philip knew too well that she would, and she began immediately.

"My dear Philip! What *art* thou drinking? Water! Dost not thou fancy the ale we are using just now?"

"The ale is all right, mother," said Joseph, scientifically frothing his tumbler full, with a contemptuous glance at his brother's beverage, for he had heard of these new-fangled notions of abstinence, and thought Philip weakly infected by them.

"I mean to try drinking water for a change," said Philip, trying to speak cheerfully.

"But thou really needs the nourishment, Philip. Remember thou wast a very delicate

baby, and I have always been anxious about thy health."

"I've had nothing the matter with me but measles and mumps in the last twenty years, mother; and as for nourishment—look at this great plate of sirloin and Yorkshire pudding!"

"It is dangerous to give up such things suddenly. Take just half a glass of ale. I shall be really distressed if thou dost not—thou wilt certainly suffer from indigestion."

"When I cannot digest good food without ale I will take it; but for the present I mean to try water."

Poor Eliza Glen! She felt that her son was getting beyond her influence. In her narrow life the daily meals were matters of great importance—solemn rites, not to be lightly disturbed, and both she and Joseph hated innovations of all kinds.

When supper time came, and the wine was quietly refused, she was almost in tears. It was rejecting a good creature of God, it was disrespect to his father's memory, who never let a day pass without taking a suitable quantity of ale and wine. He would certainly ruin his health!

Philip told her very gently that he was old enough to decide on matters of diet for himself, and he chose to drink water, it might be only for

a time; and then took refuge in silence while the flood of feeble remonstrance went on. He had only got as far as personal abstinence as yet, but day by day his eyes were opened to the effects of drinking habits, and he began to wonder how he could have been so blind. It was not only the Thwaites, but he seemed to be constantly coming across drink-wrecked lives. There was a school-fellow of his own who had been a bright, jovial lad, and that week he was before the magistrate for being drunk and fighting at a low fair. Philip had noted that Tom Evans was going down hill, but only now realised that his love of drink was the cause.

He began seriously to doubt if he could go on in the brewery. That his sons might prefer some other calling had never occurred to Jonathan Glen. There was wealth enough for both in the old business, and as soon as the boys left school they were placed in the office as a matter of course.

Philip did not wish to inconvenience his brother, and his convictions were so new that he felt it was right to wait awhile. It was a relief to him when he had to go to a northern town about a large consignment of barley. The home meals at which intoxicants were served had become a daily penance, for never one passed without his mother renewing her lamentations

over his obstinacy, and making him feel a culprit. He arranged, when he was in the north, to go on for a few days to Jedderdale to visit his well-loved cousins Josiah and Frances Barnes, a household which always helped and soothed a troubled spirit. It was some time since he had been there, and to his surprise and relief he found these good people drinking water, although a jug of beer had been provided for him. It was a great strength and comfort to be able, for the first time, to discuss his new views with sympathetic listeners, and some long, solitary walks on the wild, free moors were just what he needed.

Daily he felt a stronger conviction that more than personal abstinence was required of him, even a complete revolution in his calling and life. How could it be managed with the least friction with his mother and Joseph? And to Philip there was also another question—What would Junia Travis think? For a long time past bright visions had come to the young man of a home with a very different mistress to his ponderous, fretful mother, and his affections were set on the youngest daughter of David Travis, a leading Friend in their Meeting, who, with his sons, managed the largest woollen mill in the town. His wife was a genial, helpful woman, and the three daughters bright, energetic girls, Anna, Phœbe and Junia. As they sat together in

meeting in their Friends' bonnets, and silk shawls, few observers could distinguish the sisters apart, but Philip knew by the quicker movements, the turn of the graceful neck, and by a certain rebellious little curl of light brown hair which was apt to stray beneath the bonnet curtain, which was the woman on whom his hopes were set. He had hoped to speak, and win her before long, but with his way to make in some new business, what would her father say? Junia, he believed, would respect anyone who followed his convictions of duty, but to a large proportion of Friends of that day the total abstinence movement was singularly distasteful, so many confortable fortunes had been made by brewing, and in the wine trade; and stimulants were considered a necessary part of hospitality.

Philip's visit to Jedderdale had not been only for his own pleasure. He consulted his cousins about the Thwaites, and found that Alice's old mother was living alone in a fair-sized cottage. He called on her and told her the whole story. She had hardly heard of her daughter for ten years, for none of the family could write, and the cost of postage was prohibitive. He found her not only willing, but eager to welcome back her daughter, and help her to health and happiness where no one knew her sad tale, and where temptation would be less. Cousin Josiah offered

to employ both Thwaite and his son, and Philip hoped to be able to send them all, when the man came out of hospital.

He found, on his return, that things were going fairly. The shock had somewhat sobered Alice, and she had found work as a temporary scrubber in the hospital. Her husband might be fit to travel in a fortnight, and great was their joy at the prospect of a new start in their native place. But none of the three had any garments warm enough for the long coach ride in spring, a matter about which Philip felt quite at a loss. Money he could give, but Alice was not to be trusted to lay it out suitably. To his mother it was quite useless to apply—she would know, and care nothing for the practical needs of the poverty stricken. He thought of Mary Travis, and called to explain his wants. To his delight Junia was sitting with her mother, painting a spray of apple-blossom, and listened with real interest to his tale of the Thwaites.

"I might give the men some old things of my own, but we could not send them to Jedderdale in Friends' coats. I often feel they are useless, but it would break my mother's heart to see me in anything else."

"No, what they need is some strong workman's clothes. I have an old servant, Ann Dyer, who is an excellent manager. I know that she

buys second-hand coats for her husband, we will consult her. I expect you girls have shirts in your charity drawer, have you not, Junia ? And underclothing for the woman ? "

" Oh, yes, mother—plenty—and it is nice to be able to supply such a real need."

" I have an old, dark woollen gown I could give her, and she would need a warm shawl, and a neat bonnet. But if thou likes to entrust it to me, I will see Ann Dyer, and thou canst come and hear results."

When Philip called again, he found all difficulties overcome. Ann Dyer could take the Thwaites into her own cottage for the last night, and had provided decent clothing for all for what seemed to Philip a very small sum. He went himself in the grey dawn to see them start, and was astonished to see what a decent looking party they were. Kind Mary Travis had sent a nice basket of provisions for the journey, and with fervent thanks to Philip they mounted the coach and were gone.

This happy ending to his cares for the Thwaites was a cheer to Philip as he prepared to make the change that his conscience required in his mode of life. Slowly and carefully he thought out his plans. He could not go on drawing a large income from what he had come to see was a curse to the community, but he felt he might

withdraw a moderate amount of capital to set himself up in some new line of business.

It was not easy to face Joseph's contempt, but he was a just man, and perhaps at the bottom not unwilling to be free from a partner so apt to take up new notions as his brother Philip. The mother's reproaches were harder to bear—the presumption of her son rejecting a trade on which his father had grown rich, was a bitter cross to her, and she was backed up by her brother, uncle Jenkins, who solemnly upbraided Philip for pride, ingratitude, disobedience to parents, and many other crimes.

The young man took it all with quiet stedfastness. He was anxious to make no breach with his mother and brother. The sons had been in the habit of escorting her to Yearly Meeting on alternate years. It was Philip's turn in 1835, and he was glad to find that she still expected him to accompany her; and with uncle and aunt Jenkins they set out on the fifty mile drive in Eliza Glen's own large carriage, taking two long days for the journey, during which Philip took pains to be especially attentive and helpful.

Arrived at Devonshire House he soon found that since he had been at Yearly Meeting two years before there had been a stirring of the conscience of many Friends about the use of alcoholic drink. He overheard someone say in

the yard that his school-fellow, Thomas Harvey, who had signed the pledge at Birmingham four years before, was actually improved in health since he became an abstainer. He found out that there had been, for six years, a gathering held in some outside room of Friends interested in the Temperance question, and that it was already supported by some of the most honoured members. But with the majority of Friends the whole subject was most distasteful. One day Eliza Glen and her sister Jenkins came out of the Women's Meeting ruffling their plumage like insulted swans. "Tabitha Bayley had actually spoken in the most unseemly way about her new fancy for going without beer and wine—she had even suggested that it was not consistent for Friends to manufacture and sell them, and the new Clerk, Katherine Backhouse, had actually allowed her to speak for some time without checking her, which would have been the only suitable thing to do. Just when women Friends were *so* interested at Martha Yeardley's account of the satisfactory state of female education in Greece, it was a most trying thing to have their minds disturbed—she felt the whole morning's sitting had been spoilt by Tabitha's presumption."

This was said, not *to* Philip, but *at* him, as they drove to their inn at some distance from Devonshire House, in company with several

guests who were going to share their dinner, and who, Philip felt, would notice his abstinence the more for his mother's indignation.

It was not only the Women's Meeting which was disturbed. In the Men's, Elihu Burne, an American, a simple-minded, earnest man, spoke most fervently of the evils of drink and of the privilege of self-denial to help to remove them. To him to see a right way was to follow it, and he little understood the power of the large fortunes which had been so easily made by brewing, and malting, and also the dislike of having personal habits and tastes disturbed.

The Clerk felt the uneasiness all around him, and requested the American to shorten his remarks, and even those who agreed with him felt it useless to follow up the subject at that time.

After the sitting was over, and Friends were standing in the yard, a portly Elder who had made a large fortune by importing wine, came up to Elihu Burne, shaking a fat finger impressively:

"I must tell thee, Friend Burne, that many present this morning felt thy communication was prompted by the enemy of mankind. I would have thee to know that such subjects are considered most unseemly to speak of in London Yearly Meeting. It must not occur again."

The American made no answer. He had already been invited to a meeting of sympathisers,

to be held at the London Tavern that evening, and bided his time.

But Philip Glen's soul had been deeply stirred by Elihu's appeal, and several Friends sitting near him had noticed the kindling interest on the face of the young brewer, and the tears in his honest blue eyes when the sin and sorrow caused by drink was dwelt upon, and some of them asked him to take an evening meal with them, and attend the Temperance meeting after it, which Philip was glad to accept.

He told his mother he was invited to sup with Joseph Sturge and Robert Charleton—names so highly respected in the Society that no exception could be taken. Perhaps, if Eliza Glen had known that Joseph Sturge and his brothers had lately given up their very profitable trade in malting barley, she would not have felt him so safe a companion for Philip!

The Meeting was of thrilling interest to the young man, to whom it was quite new to hear the subject publicly discussed in a way that chimed in with all he had felt, and thought out alone since the day when his conscience had been stirred by poor Thwaite's plight, and the searching verse at evening reading.

Not only Elihu Burne spoke, but James Backhouse, Thomas Pumphrey, Josiah Newman, and other men of great weight in the Society, and

best of all was the convincing eloquence of Samuel Bowly, of Gloucester, then a man in the prime of life. He had but lately signed the total abstinence pledge, under the influence of Richard Barrett, and was throwing himself into the cause with all the splendid ability which made him such a power for good for many long years. He knew Philip slightly, and as they came out of the meeting he proposed that they should walk westward together. It was a warm May night, with a full moon, and Samuel Bowly said, "Now, Philip Glen, we will not take the shortest way, for I want thee to see for thyself that we have reason in all we have been saying against the drink to-night."

So he led the way through side lanes into by-ways, where the glaring gin-places were full of drinkers; where women, with sodden faces, and wild eyes, many with wailing infants in their arms, were swallowing the poison; where men cursed, and fought, and rolled in the gutter, for London was but scantily policed in 1835, and the evils went on unchecked. Philip watched with a sense of horrible fascination. It was from the profits of such a trade as this that his luxurious home was maintained! Samuel Bowly said few words, for he saw the object lesson was sinking in deeply, and he left Philip at his inn with a hearty handshake.

Next morning Philip sought him out at Devonshire House. "Samuel Bowly," he said, "I feel I can no longer hesitate. I *must* get free from a trade which brings such evils as we saw last night. I will sign the pledge as soon as I have an opportunity."

"And that is *now*," said Samuel Bowly, smiling, and from his pocket came a pledge-book, and a little leather case containing a tiny ink-stand, and a short quill pen, and then and there, on a seat in the yard, the name of Philip Glen was affixed to the promise to taste no more of the drink "Whereby his brother stumbled."

He told Joseph on his return home that his mind was irrevocably made up to leave the brewery as soon as it could be arranged, and he set about the search for another calling with characteristic energy. He had always had a taste for botany, and a delight in growing plants; and he heard of an elderly Friend, about twenty miles away, who wished to relinquish a business of seed growing and dealing. Here Philip established himself, and threw such real ability and enterprise into his new calling that its success was soon assured. He was well-known and liked on the corn markets and farmers soon came to him for reliable seeds of beans, vetches, and turnips. He made a journey to Holland and imported seeds of fresh and

superior vegetables, and on his own small farm made many experiments which turned out excellently. In the farmhouse he lived, with a simplicity which horrified his mother when she made the supreme effort of driving twenty miles to see him; but the frugal fare and outdoor life suited him admirably, combined with peace at meals, and a good conscience.

He seldom saw Junia during the first year and a half, but now and then at Quarterly Meeting he was met with marked friendliness, both by her and her mother. They evidently did not feel his action so quixotic and foolish as his own relations did.

At length, in the second autumn after the change, Philip felt that his new calling showed such a promise of modest success, that he ventured to call on David Travis and ask leave to seek the hand of Junia.

As he expected, the father demurred. "I have always had a liking for thee, Philip, but I feel in giving up thy father's trade thou hast been misled by enthusiasm—and enthusiasm is a very dangerous thing in a young man, I can tell thee! Then I should not like a daughter of mine to be left a young widow, and it is a serious thing to give up the support of the ale and wine to which thou hast always been accustomed. It may undermine thy health yet."

"Do I look as if my health has suffered by my two years' abstinence?"

David Travis looked Philip over critically, and saw a perfect picture of stalwart, ruddy, sun-tanned manhood.

"No—o," he said, reluctantly. "I must say that thou looks well, but no Life Insurance Society would take a teetotaler without an extra premium, as they are considered such unsafe lives. And look thee here, Philip, if I allow thee to speak to my Junia, I must have thy solemn promise not to attempt to influence her to adopt thy new-fangled ways. Women folk are not as strong as men, and she might fade away without the support of her pale ale and wine. Anyway, thou canst not speak to her at present, for she is going to stay with her uncle Jonathan, at Wakefield, for a month, and then we are expecting a visit from our young kinsman, young Thomas Walsingham, from Belfast," and the old man chuckled in a way which dismayed Philip, for he knew this was a wealthy young Friend, a distiller of spirits on a large scale, who had seen much of the Travis girls a year or two ago—and who would look at Anna or Phœbe when Junia was by? It was with an anxious heart that Philip took leave and returned to his seed farm.

He would have been reassured had he overheard Junia's first talk with her sisters on her

return from Wakefield. She was full of enthusiastic admiration of the wonderful Irish priest, Father Theobald Mathew, who had been holding a mission there. "He gave the pledge to thousands, and I took it too."

"Junia! Thou didst not!" said Anna, scandalised. "To go and kneel in public before a Romish priest, and take his medal, and make a public promise, as if thou hadst been in the habit of taking too much."

"Oh, no; I did not quite do that! He came to dinner at uncle Jonathan's, and talked so beautifully about the influence of young ladies, that Bessie and Emma said they would take the pledge, and as I am of age, I determined to do it also. We repeated the words after him as we sat on the sofa, and then he touched each of our heads and said so solemnly, 'God bless you, my dear child, and give you strength to keep it.' I hope father and mother will not mind, for I really felt a strong concern to be an abstainer, and give up wine for the sake of example. Just think if I can prevent some poor woman from falling so low as that miserable Alice Thwaites."

"But thou wilt feel the need of the wine."

"I think not. I have never cared for it, and often if water was on the table I took it in

preference. No—I cannot flatter myself there is any self-denial in *my* taking the pledge."

Junia frankly told her parents what she had done. Her father said she was a silly child to be over persuaded by that wind-bag of an Irish priest. Her mother said little, for she respected personal convictions, but she felt anxious about Junia, for, like Eliza Glen, she had been brought up to look upon stimulants as essential to good health.

A few weeks after this Philip was riding home to spend First day with his mother, when he overtook a riding party, Anna and Junia Travis, and their distant cousin Thomas Walsingham who had been to visit an interesting old castle. He was cordially greeted, and introduced to the stranger, and they rode on together, cantering, all four abreast, over a wide, open common.

It was only my Lord Paramount's daughters who wore the picturesque riding hats with long, streaming feathers—middle-class girls always rode in bonnets. Anna kept to a Friends' bonnet of moderate size, but Junia had indulged in a close, cottage bonnet of brown straw to match her flowing habit. The velvet binding set off her fair hair, and blooming cheeks, and with her graceful figure so perfectly at home on her strong bay horse, she had never looked more charming in Philip's eyes.

They passed off the common into a narrow lane, under beech trees, golden in the autumn sunlight. Here Junia purposely reined back her horse, so that Anna took the lead with their guest, who glanced back ruefully. Poor Thomas was not having a happy visit. Junia took a naughty delight in praising Father Mathew, whom an Irish distiller naturally looked upon as an insidious enemy; and also in bringing into prominence her resolve to drink nothing but water, until Thomas had made up his mind to leave on Monday without putting himself into the humiliating position of a rejected lover. It would never do for him to have a wife infected with these strange new doctrines. He was a self-complacent youth, and felt in his pique there were plenty of other young women Friends who would not despise his wealth as Junia appeared to do.

She now began to speak eagerly to Philip. "I have so wanted to ask thee if thou hast heard of the Thwaites?"

"Oh, yes, Cousin Frances wrote me a very good account. The poor wife seems quite to have recovered in the old country life. The son is rather an idle lout, but the father is very patient with him, and he has improved of late."

"That is good. Their story made me think as I never did before of the evil effects of drink.

When I was at Wakefield I took Father Mathew's pledge with my cousins. It is strange how blind we have been before! It seems to me now that no true Christian *could* go on making what does so much harm. I am so glad that thou hast given it up."

Happy Philip! With such sentiments as these from the damsel of his choice he had little to fear from her father's opposition. He felt he had not yet leave to speak plainly, but that was a very blissful ride, and in meeting next morning, sitting behind that special grey bonnet, he thanked God for the gift which is far above rubies.

Before the week was out Junia was his promised wife, declaring that she was glad she was to share an active country life, and nor to be stifled by luxury.

The farmhouse became a very happy home, although Eliza Glen would shake her head and speak of her younger son and his wife as being "half-starved," which meant that they drove a gig instead of a carriage and pair, and that no stimulants figured at their simple, but abundant meals. Their little unconventionalities also distressed her. When Junia, in the flush of happy young motherhood, would drive over with her baby boy, bringing no nurse, she was scandalised, and when Philip himself shouldered that young hero and carried him from the house of one

adoring grandmother to the other, she felt it an absolute disgrace to the family; and could only say in excuse to her cronies, "Thou knows my dear husband's mother was a Parley, and I fear my poor son Philip must take after her, for the Parley family are so very peculiar!"

CREATURELY ACTIVITY

1863

"CLANK, clank, clank," clattered the old-fashioned treadle sewing machine, with a noise which would be considered intolerable nowadays, but was little heeded by Miriam Vincent, the mother of eight children who were always wearing out their clothes. The wonderful new invention had been sent to her by a London brother the Christmas before, and the speed with which it was now turning out shirts for her boy at Ackworth was a great relief to her busy fingers.

"Mamma!" exclaimed a blooming girl of seventeen, bursting into the room. "May I go to Hyde Hall for the night? Janie is here with the pony carriage, and she says she will bring me back to-morrow in time for the children's lessons."

"Dost thou particularly want to go, Rose?" said her mother.

"I think I should like to go, Mamma, it always pleases Janie and Lizzie to have me, and I enjoy it in a way, though the Hyde Hall cousins do play such romping games. Janie has driven on with

a message to the blacksmith, but she will call for me in ten minutes."

"Very well, dear, go if thou wishes it. Art thou going to put on thy grey merino?"

"Oh, no—this linsey will do, but I must take off my blue bow, or cousin Sarah Ann will be bearing her testimony," and Rose ran away, while her mother gave a little regretful sigh.

In a few minutes the girl came back, in a warm jacket of grey shag, with large buttons, and a pork-pie hat bound with velvet. She talked to her mother whilst she laced on her strong Balmoral boots, a sensible fashion introduced by Queen Victoria, in whose early days thin kid and satin slippers were considered the only wear for gentlewomen, which restricted their movements almost as much as if their feet had been bound like a Chinese lady's.

"I don't quite understand the Hyde Hall family," said Rose, as she tugged at her laces. "Cousins Richard and Sarah Ann are so particular in many ways—why, those poor girls have never been allowed even to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or *The Wide, Wide World*, and yet they let them do things that Papa and thee would not allow us to think of. And keeping them to cottage bonnets and shawls does not really do them any good. It only seems to make them long for clothes like other girls. When I go

there they always want to try on my hat, and my hair-net, and my crinoline—which I am sure is a very small one—and I feel as if I had stirred up their discontent. One of their great grievances is that they are not allowed to say Papa and Mamma as we do. They think Father and Mother sounds so very old-fashioned. Then the boys are so rough, and talk about nothing but horses, if they *are* made to always attend Fifth-day meeting!"

"It is a pity they have never been allowed to go away to school," said the mother.

"I think one reason they like to have me as a visitor is that I have seen more in my years at Ackworth and York, and can tell them things."

"And thou mayst be able to help them a little, my Rosie; but do not be tempted to taste the hot elder wine which I have heard of at Hyde Hall."

"Catch me!—but it *is* awkward, Mamma. The last time I was there to dinner the maid asked me if I would have beer or cider, and it seemed so fussy to say water, when there was none on the table, and Dick burst out laughing and said, 'Cousin Rose is afraid of being a drunkard.'"

"Papa has several times asked cousin Richard if it would not be better for his children to grow up abstainers, but he cannot see the need of change of family habits."

"Ah, there is Janie! Farewell, Mamma dear. I hope the little ones will be good," and away went Rose to join her cousin.

Miriam Vincent returned to her sewing machine. "I wish there were some other young Friends near for Rose to associate with," she thought. "And when Walter leaves Bootham Dick and George will try and make him like themselves. I respect cousins Richard and Sarah Ann, but somehow they do not seem able to impress their goodness on their ten children."

Here the door opened and her husband came in, a fine, stalwart farmer, just home from the weekly market.

"Well, Mamma, still at thy musical instrument?" he asked, as he kissed her.

Miriam laughed. "It is very useful music," she said; "but I shall not inflict it on thee this evening, for there is nothing left to do to these shirts but the gussets and button-holes, and those must be done by hand."

Here tea was brought in, and the three youngest children followed: Wilfrid, a sturdy, independent boy of nine, who could catch his pony in the field and ride it bareback at any pace, and the twins, Annie and Fanny, rosy, fair-haired maidens of seven. Four other children were away at school, Walter at York, and the three next in age at Ackworth. It was no small effort to find means

for to many school bills at once, but there was no day school that the parents liked within reach, and Paul Vincent would say, "I do not mind how plainly my children are clothed and fed, but a good education they *shall* have."

After tea he said to Wilfrid, "Now, boy, get thy lessons learned quickly for school-ma'am Rose, and then I will have a game of chess with thee."

This incited the boy, who was anything but bookish, to give his mind to geography and tables which were soon said perfectly to Papa, and the coveted game began.

Meanwhile, the twins were helped by their mother in their little tasks of verses and spelling, after which she also joined in a merry game of dominoes before they went to bed.

When Miriam, like the good mother that she was, had paid her nightly visits to the three little beds, she came back to the sitting-room, and said, as she took up her sewing, "I hope, dear Paul, thou dost not think I was wrong in letting Rose go to Hyde Hall. She has kept very diligently to her teaching and home duties of late, and young folks must have a little change sometimes."

"No, no, my darling, thou knows best what is good for the girl, although I wish cousin Ling's family were not so fond of her. As it happens,

I am rather glad she is away to-night, as I want a good talk with thee." But he seemed in no hurry to begin, and his wife felt a little anxious, as if bad news might be coming.

At last he said, "Would it be a great trial to thee, Miriam, to leave this farm, and Brattlebury Meeting, to which thou has always belonged?"

"Not, if thou feels it right, Paul. But why? Hast thou had losses of which I have not heard?"

"No, love, no—business has gone well, but many times lately I have felt as if there were leadings to make a change for our children's sake; and to-day I have heard that old Enoch Preston has died suddenly."

"What—that old Friend who expected his Meeting to die out?"

"Did he? Well, Hayling Heath has the smallest membership in our Quarterly Meeting."

"It was when that nice young American Minister, Marsden Scott, was here that he told me the story. He had been to Hayling Heath for a First-day, and remarked to his host that the burial ground at the Meeting House was nearly full, and old Enoch said quite cheerfully, 'there was just room for the graves of all the rest of the Meeting, for he had measured it.' Marsden had a keen sense of humour, and he could not help being amused, but at the same time he felt it very sad that a good old Friend should have no

wish to see others brought to join in our privileged manner of worship."

"It was just like him. He said to me once when I expressed sorrow for the declining numbers of our Society, that 'the gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abi-ezer.' I fear his stiffness and repression has tended to drive away some who ought to attend there. But he was a good farmer, and Hayling Manor, where he has lived all his life, is in high condition. He was a yeoman, thou knows, farming his own freehold, and there is no one to succeed him. His nephew and heir is a Leeds manufacturer, and knows nothing of country life. I expect he would be glad to have it taken off his hands."

"But we could not afford to buy that large farm."

"No, but I think the nephew would prefer to rent it, as it has been in their family for many generations. It is near enough to the station for a good milk trade, and when Walter leaves Bootham he will be a great help, for he is a born farmer. I have felt anxious about having him at home here with Dick and George Ling, and other young men of their stamp for companions. Walter's taste for natural history (which they despise), has kept him away from them in the holidays, but were he in business it would be different. The Manor is a nice old house, with

a fine garden and orchard; and thou wouldst find it a privilege not to have the five mile drive to Meeting, as we have here. It is hardly ten minutes walk from Hayling Heath, so there would be more First-day rest for man and horse."

"But it is such a very small Meeting."

"Size is not everything. Brattlebury is a large one, but dost thou feel that it is as lively as it might be? We are too much a circle of relatives for freedom, and perhaps we have allowed old uncle and aunt Peters to rule us too much for our good." Paul Vincent hesitated, and then went on, "Our five Elders all take the line of repression, and I have come to feel deeply that it is not well. Thou knows, my darling, what an effort it was when I felt the call to break the silence in Meeting, but I was helped, as I reverently believe by the Divine aid, to deliver a message entrusted to me. That was a month ago, but not one of the Elders had spoken to me till to-day, when I was busy in the cattle-market, and had just sold three steers to Briggs, the butcher. I found old Job Keely standing at my elbow, and when Briggs turned away he said, sourly, 'I did hope, Paul Vincent, that after thou hadst taken on thyself to appear in the ministry, thou wouldst have returned to true consistency in thy coat collar, and in using the plain language to all men!' I was so hurt, Miriam, that I could not say a word. It seemed

to me so trivial after such a solemn experience as I felt it to be, and so strange that one appointed to cherish the church, should have no word of sympathy to give. I really feel that a fresh voice is not acceptable. We are so used to dear old Jacob Lane's invariable long sermon every meeting day (and very good sermons they are), and to Kesiah Flynn's musical chant, that anything else seems an intrusion. In a meeting like ours, where almost all are connected, I suppose the prophet is bound to be without honour. They know my faults and inconsistencies too well," he ended, sadly.

"No, dear Paul, do not think that. Those words were first applied to our Divine Master, in whose perfect life there were no inconsistencies. It is strange, but true, that we *do* appreciate ministers from a distance, but at the same time how often a life of self-denying holiness that we know well, makes very simple communications impressive."

"I love the plain language amongst ourselves, but in these days it sounds ridiculous to outsiders. Briggs is much more likely to be impressed for good by my being honest and considerate in my dealings than if I addressed him as thee and thou, and had a stand up collar to my coat! I felt it a mere outside and unimportant matter when I gave up the Friends' coat, but somehow,

I should not like to see thee without thy bonnet and cap, Miriam."

"I do not think thou wilt, Paul. I also prefer to wear what I am used to, but for the children I feel it best to dress them simply and inconspicuously. Pretty Lizzie Ling in her ultra-plain bonnet, is much more likely to be stared at than our Rose. Some of our elder Friends put such undue importance on these outside things. When aunt Peters kindly took Rose in her carriage to Quarterly Meeting, she not only lectured her on wearing a crinoline, but at the inn actually snipped out some tiny white bows from her bonnet cap, which vexed the girl sadly. But never a word did she say to her of the deeper things of the religious life. Rose is a thoughtful girl, and she told aunt Peters about her Birmingham school-fellows First-day School teaching, thinking she would be interested; but all she said was, 'My dear, do not be led away by creaturely activity.'"

"That is a favourite phrase with both uncle and aunt Peters, when they hear of younger Friends taking up work to which they did not feel called."

"Yes, thou knows my sister Frances, and Phœbe Blaine have a meeting on second-day afternoons for poor mothers—women who never are able to get to a place of worship, or have any

variety in their drudging lives. They have a clothing club, too, and it has become so popular that Phœbe's laundry room it uncomfortably crowded. In last Women's Preparative Meeting they asked leave to transfer it to the Women's Meeting House. It does seem such a pity those good premises should only be used three times a week. I know the younger Friends were in sympathy, but aunt Peters invariably speaks first, and she was very impressive about not placing dependence on creaturely activity. Cousin Sarah Ann always echoes her mother, and to my surprise Eliza Canniford did too, so consent was refused. After meeting I said to Eliza that I was sorry for Phœbe and Frances' disappointment, and she whispered, 'My dear, it would never do to admit a crowd of working-class people into our Meeting House—they might bring *fleas*.'"

Paul Vincent laughed heartily, and then said sadly, "These good Friends know not what they do in discouraging such efforts. Dost thou remember, Miriam, that stunted myrtle bush of thine, that never blossomed, and when it was turned out of the pot there was a mass of roots twisted round and round each other, and the old gardener said it was 'pot bound.' It soon recovered when its roots had room to expand. I think our Meeting has become like that myrtle;

and for thee and me, and our children, it may be better to make a fresh start elsewhere."

"I think thou art right," said Miriam, thoughtfully. "Frances would feel our leaving, and of course there would be pain in breaking many old ties, so we shall need to be very sure of guidance in the matter."

"Well, we will say nothing at present. I should in any case attend Enoch Preston's funeral, as I have known him all my life, and I may have a chance of hearing what the nephew proposes to do with the farm."

Rose came home in good time next morning, and went through the little ones' school hours in her usual lively fashion. When twelve o'clock struck and they rushed out of doors to some of the innumerable joys of country children, she tied on a white apron, and joined her mother, who was cutting up windfall apples for jelly in the store room.

"Well, my darling, didst thou have a nice time at Hyde Hall?"

"Rather a riotous one," said Rose, ruefully. "I feel half ashamed, Mamma, for I *do* enjoy the fun, but when I get home it feels as if it had not been the best kind of fun. It was worse than usual this time, for I found that cousins Richard and Sarah Ann were away for the night—and talk of mice at play! Janie and Lizzie both did

their hair like the Empress Eugenie, and tied on pink neck ribbons for tea, and then we played Blind Man's Buff, and all sorts of noisy games, and Dick brought out a concertina that one of their workmen had sold him, and taught him to play. He is so fond of music that he has picked it up wonderfully, but what *would* his father say if he saw it?"

"He would confiscate it at once, like the teacher at Ackworth did our Teddie's Jew's harp," said Miriam Vincent.

"One of the tunes he played was a polka, and we all tried to dance. Janie had learnt it from one of the servants. It was great fun, but, Mamma, the elder ones kept saying to the six little ones, 'Mind you don't tell,' and Johnnie Ling, who is a horrid little imp, said, 'You will have to do just what I want, Dick and Janie, or I *will* tell of you,' and they threatened him with all sorts of punishments if he dared. At supper, after the little ones were gone to bed, they had hot elder wine, and the boys teased me to taste it, but Lizzie is kind, and she made me a cup of cocoa. I think Dick and George amused themselves by trying to shock me by telling of the un-Friendly things they do on the sly. They said that when they were in London for the Cattle Show they went to the theatre! It does seem so horribly underhand to deceive their parents

so—and theatres are bad, are they not, Mamma ? "

" I hope thou and Walter will never go to one, Rosie, for this reason, that I feel it wrong to take amusements which do harm to our fellow creatures to provide. Some people maintain that the drama may be made instructive and elevating, and point to good, pure women who have made their living by acting ; but it is a life of great temptation, and no one can deny that it drags many a poor girl to perdition. The very publicity, and taking the characters of wicked women must be degrading. I have noticed plays advertised with such titles as ' The Worst Woman in London,' and ' The Girl Who Went Astray.' Dost not thou think it a terrible thing for a woman to assume such characters night after night for months ? Could she keep a sweet, modest character of her own ? Could she be a real Christian while leading such a life ? And if not, ought Christian people to encourage such doings by attending theatres, even if they feel it does no harm to themselves ? "

" I see," said Rose, thoughtfully. " It is like the poor gladiators we were told of at school, who were ' Butchered to make a Roman holiday.' "

" There is plenty of recreation to be had which harms no one. Papa and I want you to have a

happy time while you are young, and you older ones see that pure pleasure can be found in intellectual pursuits. That is what the Hyde Hall cousins do not know, but they are young, and I trust that when they have cut their wisdom teeth they will feel ashamed of deceiving their good parents."

"I hope they will," said Rose, drawing a long breath. "I am glad I have told thee, Mamma, for I felt so uncomfortable, and as if I do not want to go to the Lings again. Still, Lizzie is really a nice girl at the bottom, perhaps we might have her to stay here some time?"

"Oh, yes, dear—and that is the last apple, thanks to thy kind help. Now call the twins in, and see that they are tidy for dinner."

Paul Vincent came home from the funeral unusually quiet and thoughtful, and when alone with his wife, he said, "I feel as if we are being led to Hayling Heath, Miriam. John Preston took me aside after we had had tea at the Manor, and asked if I can go over and direct the bailiff occassionally until he decided what to do with the farm. He had heard his uncle speak of me, and felt that it was what he would have wished. John and his wife are staying on a week or two to arrange matters. Old Enoch lost his wife twenty years ago, and would never allow her private possessions to be touched. Mary Preston

said it was most pathetic to find a half-made shirt in her workbasket on the side table, for she died suddenly, as well as her husband. And all her nice merino gowns, and warm shawls are so terribly moth eaten they are no use to anyone! Mary said it would have been a more real honour to her aunt's memory to have passed them on to be a comfort to some poor women.

"They intend to have a sale of the furniture, but it is such heavy old-fashioned, oaken stuff that it will not fetch much. I am to go over again on Sixth day to see John, and stay the night, and Mary asked if thou wouldst not come too—it seems she was thy school-fellow."

"Yes, she was Mary Murray then, the youngest amongst us, and quite a pet. But I have never seen her since."

"Thou wilt find her a very pleasing, thoughtful Friend. Canst thou leave the children to come with me?"

"Oh, yes," said Miriam, smiling. "We have a grown-up daughter now, and I can trust Rose to do in our absence precisely as she would in our presence. I should like to see the place before we decide, for although I have been at Hayling Manor years ago, I do not remember much about it."

A warm welcome awaited them when the day came, Miriam and Mary Preston meeting as old friends. While their husbands went out to walk

round the farm, Mary took her visitor all over the house, little guessing how deep was her interest. It had been well kept by Enoch's old housekeeper and her daughter, to whom he had left a handsome legacy. There were plenty of good bedrooms for a large family, a sunny school-room, and sitting rooms that fresh paper and paint would make bright and pleasant. The garden was charming, and full of such roses, and uncommon shrubs and plants which showed it had been the hobby of a man of taste and culture. After the early tea Paul Vincent said to his hostess, "I should like to take my wife out for a little walk, if thou wilt excuse her." It was a lovely September evening, and after looking round the homestead in earnest talk, they strolled towards the village, soon finding the old stone Meeting House, half hidden by the lime trees, which bent over the quiet graves. The door was ajar, and Paul and Miriam entered. The last rays of the setting sun shone through the western casement, gilding the old grey oak of the panels and forms as they sat down side by side—at first in silence, followed by a low prayer for guidance as to whether their appointed lot lay in this village, and that, if it did, not only might worship in that house be blessed to themselves and their children, but that it might become a centre of help to those around.

When they came out both felt satisfied that the change must be made, and they agreed to ask John Preston at once if Paul would be acceptable as a tenant. Nothing could have pleased him better. It was within a few days of Michaelmas, and to have just the man whom his uncle would have chosen ready to assume responsibility at once, was a relief to the Leeds manufacturer, and the two men were soon deep in talk of leases and valuations.

Meanwhile Miriam helped Mary Preston in the sorting of what seemed an endless quantity of goods from the stores of the aunt whom Mary had never even seen. It is always a pathetic task to turn out an old home where one family have lived for generations, and they found, among piles of utter rubbish, many interesting things, snuff boxes, shoe buckles, bits of exquisite embroidery done by long-forgotten hands, a few miniatures, and piles of silhouettes, those little black profile portraits which preceded photography. Doubtless these were once treasures, but no names were there, and no one living was old enough to identify them, so they had become of little interest. Many bundles of old letters they sorted, some of family interest, but many which had better have been destroyed half a century ago. "If I do not look over them here, I shall never manage it at Leeds," said Mary,

and was glad of the help of her capable visitor, up to the hour when the Vincents were obliged to go home.

It was rather a shock to Rose when she heard that they were to leave the only home she had known, but a visit to Hayling Manor filled her with bright anticipations of the new life there. Paul Vincent could not leave his own farm until the year's notice was over, so the autumn months were extremely busy for him.

When Christmas came Walter left York, and although only sixteen was so sensible and responsible a boy that he soon became his father's right hand, and spent much time at Hayling Manor. From the fresh neighbourhood he often brought home beetles, bird's eggs, and shells for his collections, which inspired Wilfrid to do likewise, and many happy evenings were spent by the big and little brothers over these treasures.

There was no Ackworth winter vacation in those days, and very strange it seemed to Edith, Edgar, and Grace to hear they were to return in the summer to an unknown home, for as the new farm needed most attention, the move to Hayling Manor was made in the spring.

The first pale green leaves were bursting from their crimson sheaths on the Meeting House limes on the bright First-day morning when the Vincents and their five children first worshipped

there. The family were a very welcome sight to the eight or ten Friends who had faithfully kept up the silent Meeting since Enoch Preston died.

But it was a silent Meeting no longer. Paul Vincent's gift, so long repressed, found large openings, and Miriam's occasional, simple, trustful prayers helped him and all the little congregation. One or two families who had drifted away under the old *régime*, came back when the report of a living Meeting spread, and became regular attenders.

The Vincents found Hayling Heath a sadly neglected village, with a drinking Squire, and a bachelor clergyman who understood Greek and Hebrew much better than the broad country vernacular of his parishioners, and no Nonconformist Chapel within three miles.

Now Miriam's "babies" had reached the mature age of eight years, and she had such a capable helper as Rose, she felt the time was come to try and help other mothers. Phœbe Blaine was invited to explain matters at a preliminary tea party, and very soon thirty or forty women gathered in the Meeting House on Monday afternoon for cheerful reading, clothing club, a simple, homely Bible lesson, and womanly sympathy in all the trials and difficulties of life.

Next Rose, who noticed the evil influence of the two village beer shops, developed a concern

to start a Band of Hope—a most unheard of thing in a village where beer had been considered one of the chief ends of life! It was uphill work at first, through the parents' prejudice and apathy, but the novelty attracted the children, and soon the Meeting House was crowded with them, some coming miles to attend. Walter came to help—"Just to keep Rose's brats in order," he said, but soon became a most efficient conductor. It seemed best to have singing, which these untrained young Friends could not manage, but Rose coaxed the young school mistress to help in this department, and in due time she became a warm abstainer herself. The Meeting House resounded to the tune of "Give me a draught from the crystal spring," in a way which would have horrified Enoch Preston, or old aunt Peters, even though no instrument but the human voice was allowed on the premises.

When John Preston came on a business visit he spoke to Paul Vincent of the good influence of Adult Schools on town workmen, and together they started one on Sunday afternoons, because to men in charge of cattle, the early school is impossible. It was never large, but a group of the more intelligent inhabitants gathered to it, learning lessons of brotherhood and mutual aid as they studied the New Testament together. Walter soon found his place in teaching men

twice his age to read and write, for it was long before the days of compulsory education.

Lizzie Ling never forgot her affection for Rose and kept her informed of great changes which had come to Hyde Hall. No intoxicants came on the table now, for Richard and Sarah Ann Ling had had a rude awakening when Dick and George came home after a fair decidedly the worse for drink.

In spite of the bitter sorrow of his parents, Dick, the first-born son, had acquired the taste for stimulants so deeply that he finally vanished from the neighbourhood, and went out to Australia in a vain hope that a fresh environment would break the chain.

Janie made an early and foolish marriage, but Lizzie and George both became thoughtful and steady and a comfort to their parents.

After a visit to Rose, Lizzie also started a Band of Hope in her village, and in course of time Johnnie, the imp, became her best helper.

How many men and women who have risen to fill large places in the philanthropic and religious world have made their first efforts in promoting the cause of truth and righteousness among the children in some humble Band of Hope? From Hayling Heath Meeting House, and the efforts of those two bright young Friends in their teens, scores of men and women went out

into the world prepared to resist the ever-present temptations to drink which have wrecked so many lives, and with their minds and tastes turned to whatsoever things are lovely and of good report. The younger sisters when they left school, took up the work with enthusiasm, which was well, for Rose was soon carried off to bloom in a home of her own. Girls in the sixties did not all think that they must desert their parents and take up some special vocation as soon as school days were over, but cheerfully settled at home, doing the work that was nearest, and very useful work it often was.

As years went on a slip of the meadow at the back of the Meeting House was bought by Friends to enlarge the burial ground, and when all that was mortal of good Paul Vincent, at the age of eighty-five, was laid there, it was in the presence of hundreds of men and women of all classes who had reason to bless his faithful "creaturely activity."

HOW THE MANTLE FELL

1875

It was Monthly Meeting day, and all the glorious sunshine of golden autumn weather lit up the lime trees which were dropping their first yellow leaves upon the green graves outside the grey stone Meeting House.

Within, some two score Friends were just settling for their Meeting for Worship. They had with them the "acceptable company" of one of the best loved ministers from America, Silas Morton, a genial, white-haired old man, who, although he wore the wide-brimmed hat and straight collar of the most rigid section of the Society, never tried to impress outward conformity on others. "My ministry is not one of condemnation," he would say, smiling; and like Whittier's "Pilgrim":

> "He made his own no circuit-judge to try
> The freer conscience of his neighbours by."

He was ushered to the first seat in the gallery by the local ministers. Several women Elders, still wearing the genuine Quaker bonnet, seated

themselves beyond him, leaving one seat vacant for "the mother of the meeting"—gentle Persis Bell, the only woman recorded minister of this branch of the community.

Below, the company were taking their seats; soberly clad women, bright faced girls in quiet hats, shrewd business men, all leaving their avocations on this week-day morning for this quiet hour of worship and church business.

Just as the hush was falling, the door opened again to admit two Friends of very different appearance. First, a tall, active woman in a riding habit, her dark hair closely braided in a great knot under her boulder hat, her cheeks blooming with exercise. She was followed by a man slightly younger, evidently her brother, in rough frieze coat, corduroy breeches and high boots.

A half smile of recognition passed over several faces, as they noted that Ruth and Andrew Netherby had ridden over from their farm, making a bee line of the twelve miles over high pastures and lonely bridle paths, only known to those whose whole lives had been passed among those northern hills.

Andrew sat down on the men's side—next to the door, a reminder of the chivalry of men in the days of persecution, that they might bear the first brunt if Meeting were roughly interrupted.

A girl on the side seat glanced up as they came in, and blushed crimson under her shady hat. Only a few days before Helen Holmes and Andrew Netherby had plighted their troth, and she had not seen his sister since. Ruth crossed over and sat down beside her—the gauntletted riding glove on the left hand gave a warm pressure to the neat grey kid next to it, and then silence fell.

Still Persis Bell, the ever-punctual, had not appeared. Perhaps she was waiting for her nephew, a busy solicitor, who would come by a later train. A local Friend knelt in prayer, pleading that their gathering might be a time of special blessing, and of re-dedication to the Lord's service. To Andrew and Helen, sitting together for the first time since their troth-plight, it seemed most appropriate and helpful.

As Friends sat down, good, motherly Elizabeth Barnes shifted her seat to that next Silas Morton —their American visitor must not find vacancy when he turned to look for a hand to break up meeting. A woman of abounding hospitality, she noted that the Monthly Meeting was more largely attended than usual, and her thoughts flew to the preparations for dinner in her house near. Would there be cup-custards enough, and would the overflow party in the schoolroom be obliged to use teaspoons for their pudding ? She caught herself up with a sense of shame—

that she, sitting at the head of the Meeting, in Persis Bell's own seat, should admit such wandering thoughts! She resolutely closed her eyes and endeavoured to join in the united worship.

The silence was long, the American visitor sat with bent head, evidently under deep concern. At last he arose. "Friends," he began, "when I asked for my minute for service in this land I told my liberating Meeting that I desired to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Not once during these months have I felt led to speak of anything but the life of our blessed Lord in the New Testament, and the sayings of His apostles. But to-day, as I sought for a message for you, none seems given but the story of Elijah and Elisha." He went on to speak of the great prophet of Israel throwing his mantle over the young man at the plough, who became his faithful attendant, until the master was called to higher service, and the mantle which fell from him was taken up by the prophet who was in due time to take his place.

It was but a short sermon, and he sat down.

A few minutes later the door opened, and Stephen Bell came in, carrying the small, but heavy, leather case of books, jocularly called "The weight of the Meeting." He took his seat near the door, and bowed his head on the back of the form in front, evidently under strong

emotion. Some Friends watched him curiously. Was the reticent, reserved Stephen Bell about to make a first appearance in the ministry ?

At last he rose. " Friends," he said, " I am the bearer of heavy tidings. My dear aunt is gone from us, passing away in her sleep, although yesterday she was as well as usual, and preparing to come to Monthly Meeting. Her landlady found this letter addressed to me, which she had placed beside her bed every night for more than a year :—

" ' My beloved Nephew,—The doctor has given me good tidings to-day. He says I shall probably be called home suddenly, and be spared the long decline of helpless dependence on others which I have so dreaded. I have debated whether I ought to tell you, but I feel the strain of watching for the end would be harder for thee and thy dear wife than the shock of hearing I am gone. You have both been so good to me, and so has every one. Give my dear love to all Friends, and thank them for the affection which has made my life such a happy one. I ask that you will all unite with me in praising Him who gives the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Thy tenderly attached aunt, Persis Bell.' "

The reader's voice broke, and he sat down again with hidden face. The startled Meeting felt stunned—not one of them but had received

manifold loving kindness from the good woman they would never see amongst them again. Her gift in the ministry was not large, but redolent of peace and goodwill—hopeful, helpful, cheerful. How they would miss her in the Monthly Meeting, as well as in her own town of Braxstead!

No one knew her worth better than old Charles Coles, the retired Superintendent of one of the large Friends' Schools. At the time of a terrible epidemic, when his own wife lay dying, the teachers, as well as many pupils, were stricken down; Persis Bell had come to the school, had nursed the sick, controlled the well, brought an atmosphere of hopefulness and attention to duty, and tided them over the hard time in a wonderful way, which he could never forget. But his mind was lifted above the sense of loss, and kneeling, he voiced the feeling of the Meeting in thankfulness for the blessing of that consecrated life among them, and for the blessed hope through Christ for her, and for themselves.

To most of those present the tidings had entirely blotted out the previous address, but to Ruth Netherby it came back with startling force —Persis Bell's mantle—on whom would it fall? Could it be that *she* was called to be the general helper of the community?

Although heartily rejoicing in her brother's engagement, she had wondered where way would

open for her services. For ten years past she had been the busy mistress of the large farmhouse. Now Helen, well qualified by her training as a farmer's daughter, would take her place. Was this the answer to her prayer for guidance to a place of usefulness? She could only wait and see.

When the Meeting was broken up, Andrew Netherby, the assistant Clerk, turned to Stephen Bell, and said in a low voice, "Let me take the table to-day. You have had such a shock, surely you would rather go home?"

"Thank thee, Andrew, I think I shall feel better satisfied to do it myself. I prepared the minutes last night, but I shall be glad if thou wilt do most of the reading," and with something of Spartan self-control, the Clerk walked up the Meeting, and spread his books and papers on the desk.

It was in the early days when men and women Friends began to transact their business in conference, to the greatly added interest of the Monthly Meeting. Ruth had often noted the contrast in the hands of the Clerks: Stephen Bell's white and slender, the hands of the town-bred scholar; Andrew's large, brown and capable, hardened with practical work in many an agricultural emergency, but in spite of their different training the two Clerks worked admirably

together. To-day the white hands trembled, and the brown were busier than usual placing every paper just when and where it was needed; and Andrew's good, clear voice, well trained at York School, went steadily through minutes, applications and reports, and all the needful business.

When it was over, Elizabeth Barnes laid hold on Ruth. "Thee and Andrew will dine with us? My husband wants to talk to thy brother about that trust property. But, dear, dear, how *shall* we get along without Persis Bell? Dear creature!—she was a young teacher at Ackworth when I went, a little shy child nearly fifty years ago, and she was so sweetly kind to me, and has been ever since," and the good woman's eyes filled with tears.

"We shall all miss her sadly," said Ruth, thoughtfully—then in a brighter tone: 'We shall be pleased to dine with you, and hast thou room for Helen Holmes as well?"

"Oh, yes, but I heard her parents agreeing to dine with Samuel Smith—will not she go with them?"

"I think she would like to come with us to-day. I must let thee share a happy secret, Elizabeth Barnes—Helen is going to be my dear sister."

The worthy Elder had the faculty of rejoicing with those who rejoice, and although her eyes

were still moist, her face fairly beamed. Helen was kissed and congratulated, for both young people were deservedly popular. The good news was passed on, and many kind greetings met the pair, but still the sense of loss was with the Friends as they left the Meeting House, and wended to the houses where hospitality awaited them.

Each one had something to tell of Persis Bell's worth, from the hearty, if irreverent, " She was such a jolly old girl," of Joe Barnes, to the sketch Charles Coles was giving to the American of the life just ended. How Persis Bell had kept a successful school in Braxstead, had brought up her orphan nephew, Stephen, had served on the School Board, worked for the Bible Society, and been chief promoter of every effort of Friends for the elevation of their townsfolk.

Those old Monthly Meeting dinners! What an example of the grace of hospitality they were. The long tables spread with linen of exquisite texture, the bright silver and glass, the plain, but abundant food. Great joints of meat for the hungry, and fruit tarts and custards often delicately compounded by the fair hands of the hostess the day before. Then the long pause of thanksgiving after all were seated, the buzz of friendly talk, the happy, family feeling of it all. The old order has changed, and Friends live too far apart

now to offer hospitality in the old way, but those Monthly Meeting dinners were pleasant times.

In the garden, when the meal was finished, Helen drew her future sister-in-law aside. "Ruth dear, you will live with us, won't you? I cannot bear to think of turning you out of your lifelong home. Andrew looks to you in everything."

"And now he must look to *you*," said Ruth, smiling. "Believe me, Helen, I am more than satisfied with Andrew's happiness, and I am sure it is generally best for husband and wife to be alone together, so I would rather make my home elsewhere. I do not know where, yet, but way will open, and the right place be shown to me," and with this Helen was obliged to be satisfied. She walked with them to the inn yard, saw them mount their horses and ride away at a brisk pace in order to reach home before twilight fell, and then rejoined her parents.

A few days after the large Meeting House at Braxstead was crowded for the funeral of Persis Bell. The small, plain coffin was carried in, with no ostentatious pile of wreaths, but a single spray of large white lilies, emblem of a blameless life, placed there by the nephew to whom she had been a mother.

To make room for the public, some of the local Friends, including Ruth, were seated in the minister's gallery, chairs were put in the aisles,

and many young men stood about the doors. All sorts and conditions were there: the Mayor, the Rector, the Doctor, old women from the Almshouse, soldiers in uniform, old pupils, and Friends from far and near; hundreds of lives which had been touched for their good by that one modest, loving, Christian soul. As Ruth looked over the gathering, the Bible words flashed into her mind: "More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife."

Charles Coles briefly explained our mode of worship to those unaccustomed to it, and one after another testified to that Grace which had enabled the departed to live her beneficent life, and to be ready to enter the Life beyond with such happy trust.

Then, through streets of closed blinds, the whole congregation followed to the Friends' quiet burial ground half a mile away. With a few more words of prayer and praise the coffin was lowered, and after one last look the mourners turned away.

Ruth found herself walking with Lucy Kirby, Persis Bell's landlady, for since Stephen's marriage fifteen years ago she had preferred not to have the burden of a house, but lived in rooms over a china shop kept by the Kirbys, who were Friends, and most worthy people.

"No one could have had a better lodger," said Mrs. Kirby to Ruth. "Always cheerful and

considerate, and making the best of things, it has been a blessing to have her in the house. Stephen Bell is going to pay the rent till Christmas while he and Mrs. Bell are sorting and disposing of the furniture—there will not be much to do, for she has been arranging and labelling her papers during this past year, and has destroyed a good many. I can't bear to think of anyone else in those rooms, although I suppose I ought to try and let them in the spring."

Was this the home that Ruth needed? Could she, country bred as she was, settle in a street of a busy town? Did the "mantle" include living in those rooms, the scene of so many a happy tea-party, of so many a wise counsel and sweet consoling.

A few days after, when she had ridden into the town by herself, she went to see the rooms. There was a private door in a side street, and a good staircase led to a large sitting-room with a sunny south window full of flowering plants, and a modest bedroom behind, and Mrs. Kirby had a spare room for an occasional visitor. Ruth looked at them thoughtfully, and took Mrs. Kirby into her confidence. The rent was moderate, and suitable to her means, and although the rooms looked old-fashioned and dingy, yet fresh paint and paper, with her own furniture, would work wonders. So she

engaged them, charging Mrs. Kirby to say nothing at present.

The months that followed were busy ones, arranging the old house for Andrew's bride, but she said little of her own plans until the wedding day at Easter, after Andrew and Helen had departed for their wedding tour in the Isle of Wight. Two sisters, with their husbands, and a brother whose wife was not able to be present, returned with Ruth to spend the night at the old home, so soon to be ruled by a new mistress.

What a noble, north-country tea she had provided for them! What home-cured ham, and large buff eggs; what preserves and honey, and various kinds of hot cakes—just the things they remembered as treats in their childhood's days in those large, low rooms.

Tea over, they drew round the blazing wood fire, and talked of the wedding and of Andrew and Helen's future life.

"In this large house there is plenty of room for you, Ruth," said George, comfortably.

"When you and Alice were first married, would you have appreciated a much older sister always around?" queried Ruth, laughing.

"Well—no—but you must have a home somewhere, and you have always been here."

"It is better for Helen to begin with a free hand. The workpeople would not understand

that the old mistress has abdicated, so I am better away."

"Then come and live with us, Ruth," said Hetty, the eldest sister, plaintively. "The children are always so good with you, and it would be such a relief to me." Ruth knew that Hetty's nature was to shirk every duty that anyone else would take. She was fond of her nephews and nieces, but declined the post of unpaid mother's help.

"I wish you would come and live with me," said Mary Weston, who preferred to be called Marie. "In Kensington there it always something going on, and you would soon shake off your North Country ways."

Ruth laughed merrily. "I *prefer* North Country ways. You would have me perpetually chanting, 'The oak, and the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,' until you were glad to send me home, where I belong! No, thank you, Pollie dear—I beg your pardon—Marie; I could not settle in London, although I hope to pay each of you a good visit when Helen comes home, and later in the summer to visit our Irish cousins."

"And then, what do you intend to do?"

"I mean to settle in Braxstead, in Persis Bell's rooms." There was a chorus of disapproval: "To live alone," "over a shop," "in that noisy town," "it looks as if you had quarrelled with us all."

Ruth said nothing, till quiet John Watson spoke decidedly : " Surely Ruth is entitled to live her own life. She has always been at some one's beck and call, let her now make her own choice. I know," he said, kindly, " that she will be sure to find ways of helping those around her wherever she is."

So Ruth was left in peace, and when the newly-married pair returned, and Helen was duly installed, she paid her round of visits and enjoyed the whole of Yearly Meeting, which she had not been at liberty to attend since she was quite a young girl. When autumn came she settled happily in her new home, finding independence sweet. Under her clever touch the rooms looked tasteful and homelike, and many came there as to a haven of rest, as in their former owner's time.

Ruth was too wise to attempt to take up all Persis Bell's activities, knowing her own limitations, and that no two are called to precisely the same line of service, but she helped Mrs. Stephen Bell with the large Mother's Meeting, and the Band of Hope and Junior Sunday School soon blossomed under her hands, for Ruth loved children, and had the gift of happy management.

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